

Militant

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BRIXTON: TORIES TO BLAME

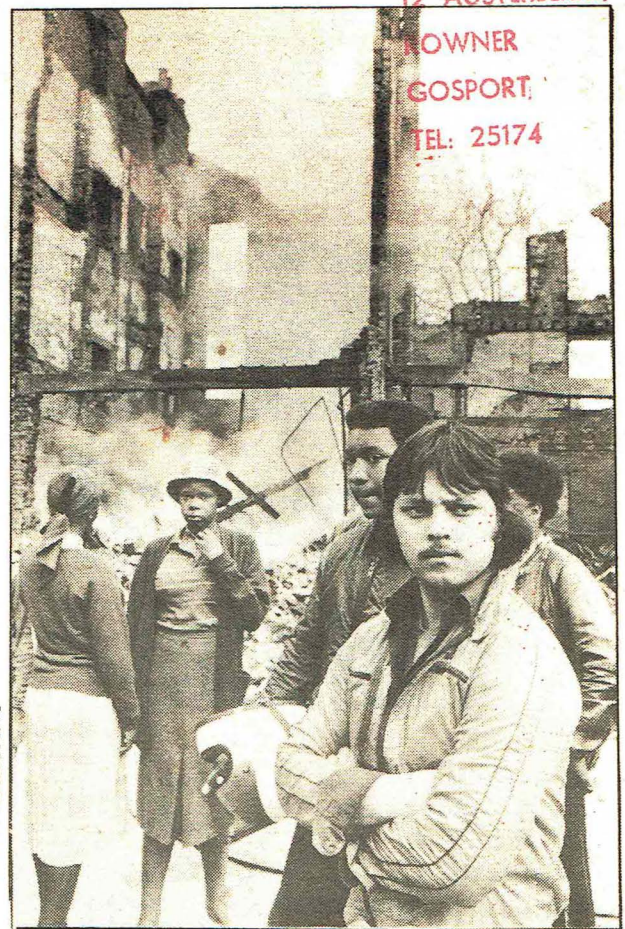
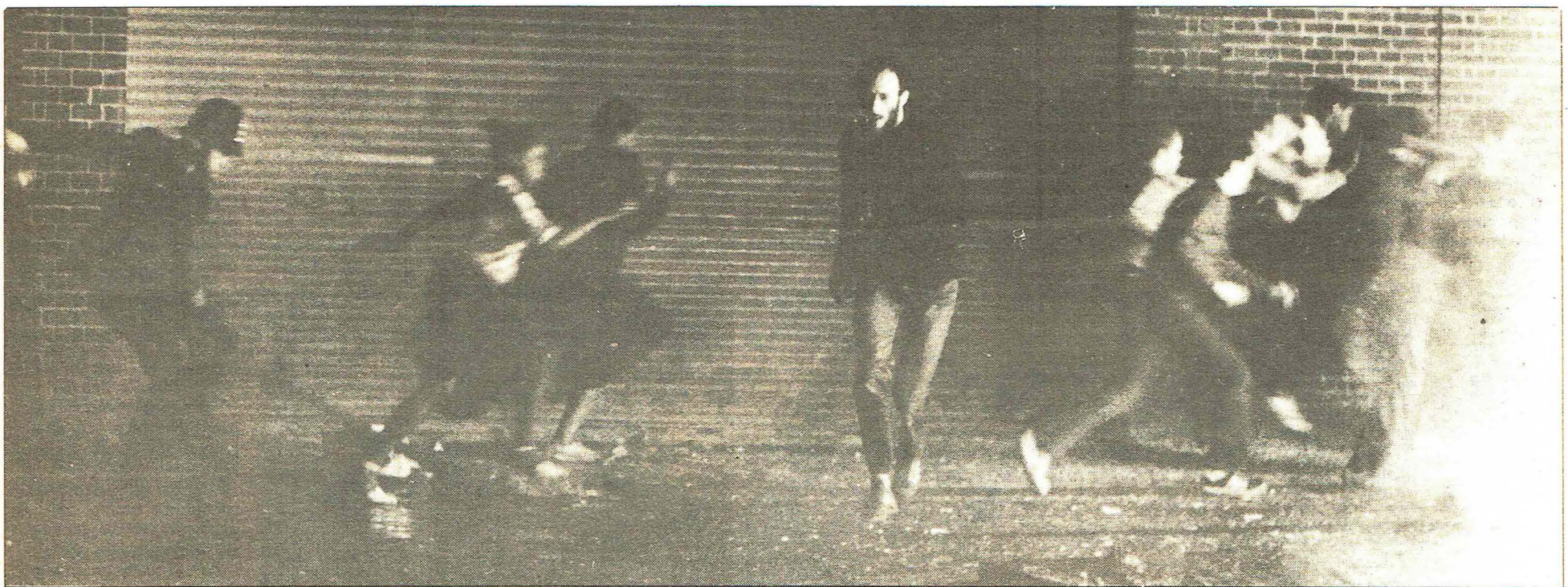


Photo: MILITANT

WITHDRAW POLICE ARMY OF OCCUPATION!



Brixton on 11 April

Further reports pages 2, 3, 4.

Photo: J McKittrick (Militant)

Brixton was engulfed in a fireball of anger last Saturday. The explosion was sparked off by the provocative police intervention.

Youth in Brixton have been subjected to a state of siege for several years. Hardened racist elements within the police ranks have singled out blacks for harassment and repression.

"The police started it." "They asked for it." They wanted it and now it's happened." "The police are always onto the blacks."

"This is terrible. But it's surprising that it hasn't happened before!"

These were the com-

ments of working people in the area on Saturday night, black and white, young and old alike.

This was not a race riot. It was angry and frustrated youth kicking back at police repression, at intolerable dead-end conditions, and at the dire effects of Tory policies.

The lesson for the labour movement is that

the same thing could happen in Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, and every other big city hit by the same problems of mass unemployment and mass poverty created by the decline of British capitalism unless Labour provides a fighting, socialist alternative.

Most of those involved in Brixton were blacks, but it happens to be blacks who bear the brunt of mass unemployment, rotten housing and a run-down environment in this area.

There was no hostility or hatred directed against whites generally.

But there was enormous hostility and hatred against the Tory government. The angry reception for Whitelaw when he toured the area on Sunday left no doubt about that.

"While Thatcher stays
CONTINUED ON
BACK PAGE

Jobs not Bull!

Who says the Tories have no plans to stop the horrors of youth unemployment? They now plan to send us into the Army—for £23.50 a week.

We already have an Army of youth at the moment. An army of unemployed, 83,926 school-leavers were still out of work this February, well over double the February 1980 figure.

Careers offices nationally have 3,657 vacancies on their books. Most are for low-paid, dead-end jobs.

This is only a fifth of last year's vacancies, yet at the end of the summer term, no less than 450,000 school-leavers are expected to be dumped on to the dole!

Brixton is a warning to

By Suri Krishnamma
(Erith & Crayford LPYS)

Fight back with the Labour Party Young Socialists!

LPYS Conference preview—centre pages

the bosses of the likely reaction of the youth, so it is no surprise that Tory minds have lightly turned to thoughts of military discipline.

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) and Department of Employment have put suggestions to the Manpower Services Commission for the Army to "help" the

unemployed through the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP).

The MOD already sponsor work experience schemes at civilian establishments. No doubt the brass hats would like to replace more civil servants

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PAGE FIVE

Defend Brixton

Democratic Control of Police!

The report of the enquiry into policing in Brixton, initiated by Lambeth Council, warned last January that repressive police methods could provoke an explosion [for details see page 4].

The urgent need to introduce democratic control over the police was raised, although not answered by the report. But the London Labour Party manifesto for the GLC elections put forward clear measures for making the police democratically accountable:

"A Labour GLC will campaign for a Police Authority consisting solely of elected members of the GLC and London Boroughs to have control over the Metropolitan and City Police. This Authority is to have power to appoint all officers to the rank of Chief Superintendent and above, scrutinise the day-to-day affairs of the

force, and to allocate the resources to the various police functions.

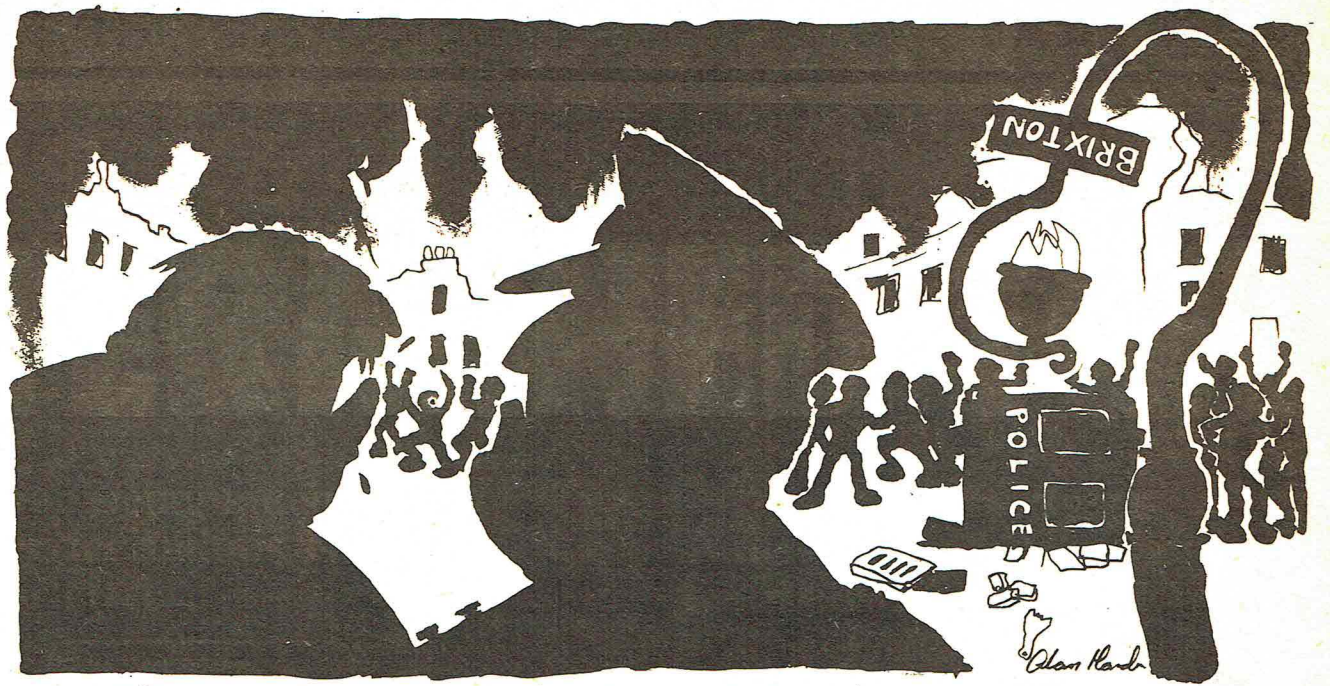
"We believe an independent complaints procedure should be established. The proposed police committee we will set up, will in the meantime investigate complaints against the police and publish reports.

"The Special Patrol Group, Special Branch and Illegal Immigration Intelligence Unit should be disbanded. Surveillance of political and trade unions activity must end, and all files collected for non-criminal reasons should be destroyed.

"All police officers will have the right to join unions and to take industrial action."

Events in Brixton clearly underline the need for such policies.

The Labour Movement must fight to ensure that Labour Party manifesto for the GLC elections put forward are implemented.



THE TROUBLE WITH THESE YOUNG THUGS IS THEY'VE NEVER DONE A DAYS WORK IN THEIR LIVES

DROP ALL CHARGES!

All charges arising from the Brixton riot should be dropped. This demand, put forward by the Labour Party Young Socialists, must be taken up by the whole labour movement.

Responsibility for the riot rests squarely on the shoulders of the police. On Saturday night the police refused to withdraw, although they were warned by local leaders who were attempting to calm things down that a massive intervention would provoke even more trouble.

Despite McNee's claim that

there would be "no retreat" by the police, the police completely lost control for three or four hours on Saturday night. This is when most of the fighting and burning took place.

But most of the arrests came later, it was when the police, with big reinforcements, felt that they were gaining the upper hand that they began to make arrests—mostly in a completely arbitrary and discriminate way.

Both black and white youths, many of whom were just bystanders, were grabbed.

One policeman was heard to say: "There are so many black bastards, I don't know

who to nick next".

Many police were wildly wielding their batons, and eye-witnesses saw some policemen with unauthorised weapons such as pick handles, large sticks, and long rubber tubes.

Police Brutality

Arrests were carried out in the most brutal manner in many cases. Police were handcuffing prisoners with their hands behind their backs, and then dragging them along by the hair or even

by the legs.

There was at least one case of a young black youth with injuries being arrested on his arrival at a hospital casualty department.

After the riot, there was also heavy-handed police raids on houses in the Railton Road area. Some of these have been shown on the television news and reported in the national press.

McNee's claim that it was outsiders who fermented the riot was not borne out by those who appeared in the courts on Monday morning. All but three of twenty-one defendants appearing at one court came from the Brixton area.

As a result of the police tactics, many people will be appearing in court on completely arbitrary or trumped-up charges.

Only a few days before Brixton exploded, the authorities finally decided to drop all outstanding prosecutions against those charged after the riots in the St. Paul's district of Bristol, which took place just a year ago. In many cases, the police simply could not produce credible evidence to substantiate their charges.

To proceed with charges in Brixton now will only add to the anger and bitterness that produced the riot in the first place.

While prosecutions are going on, the labour movement must of course fully support the efforts to defend those charged. All the cases must be rigorously fought.

But it is vital to press the Tory government and the authorities to declare an amnesty and drop all charges.

Photo: MILITANT



Police in action in Brixton, 12 April

Scarman: NO ANSWER

The enquiry set up by the Tories under Lord Scarman can provide no solutions to the crisis in Brixton.

The Tory Home Secretary, William Whitelaw, has established the enquiry under the 1964 Police Act. Its main concern will therefore be the policing of the area and the immediate causes of the riot.

But the role of the police in

the area has long been known to everyone in the area, and has been fully documented in the reports of the Lambeth Council Study, the All Lambeth Anti-Racist Movement's "Cause for Alarm", and many other investigations.

Given that it is the police who should be in the dock, what confidence can people have in an investigation headed by a top judge, Law Lord Scarman?

Scarman has said that he

is going to investigate the underlying causes, as well as the immediate reasons for the upheaval.

But it is extremely unlikely, to say the least, that many blacks and youth, the people who experience police tactics and the area's problems at first hand, will have enough confidence to come and give evidence before such a tribunal.

Scarman headed the 1969 Tribunal of Enquiry into the

disturbances in Northern Ireland—without making any noticeable contribution to a solution to the problems of the Six Counties.

In 1974/75 Scarman conducted an enquiry into the anti-fascist demonstration in Red Lion Square on 15 June 1974, in which Kevin Gatsley was killed as a result of police action.

Scarman, however, generally exonerated police tactics, despite the fact that

police were protecting a National Front meeting and charged the anti-fascist demonstration with horses. Scarman called for the courts to adopt a tougher line in "public order" cases.

What confidence can we have, then, in an enquiry headed by a lone judge—himself a pillar of the state's "law and order" establishment?

Only a people's enquiry, based on the labour and trade union movement, can provide any answers.

It is not just a question of investigating the causes. The real reasons for the explosion, including the appalling social

conditions, must certainly be investigated and explained to workers throughout Britain.

But more importantly, the labour movement enquiry must be the launching pad for a campaign to change the situation and solve the problems.

To do this, the enquiry must be firmly based in the labour movement, with its foundations in the shop stewards' committees, trade union branches, Labour Parties, Young Socialists, together with black organisations, community groups and tenants' associations.

LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS SAY...

Defend Brixton

Brixton has erupted with an explosion of pent-up anger.

It was provoked by a massive police presence on Friday night and, specifically, the fighting was started by one particularly brutal arrest at about 5pm on Saturday. The youth of the area hit back at police.

The violence of the attack on the police shows the intense anger of the youth, especially the black youth, at oppressive police activity in the area.

Anger at the police has been intensified by the mounting number of racist and fascist attacks on black people and working class activists. While the police in many areas systematically harass and arrest black youth, little or nothing is done against those responsible for racist or fascist attacks.

Feelings of frustration and anger have also been intensified in the black community over the Deptford fire, in which 13 black people died. Few believe that the police are energetically trying to track down and arrest those responsible. In fact, investigations into the fire have involved even more harassment of black people.

The smashing and burning of big stores and shops in Brixton, at first completely wild and indiscriminate, demonstrates the bitter frustration of young people with no jobs, atrocious housing and living conditions, poor education and recreational facilities, and little or no hope of better things to come.

This was not a 'race riot'. Anger and violence was directed entirely against the police.

The fighting mostly involved blacks, but this is because it is mostly blacks who live in the decayed, central area of Brixton. But both black and white youth were involved in the fighting.

White people moving about the area of the fighting, of whom there were a great many, were not attacked, or threatened, or intimidated. A few white journalists were threatened, but only because they were at first thought to be plain-

This statement, which 'Militant' fully supports, was produced as a leaflet on Sunday (12 April) by members of the Labour Party Young Socialists National Committee and London Regional Committee, and distributed in Brixton. The leaflet advertised a meeting for Wednesday 15th in Brixton Town Hall, with John Tilley (MP Lambeth Central), Bob Lee (PNP [UK]), and Kevin Ramage (LPYS Chairman) speaking.

clothed policemen.

The assertion by the Metropolitan police chief, David McNee, that the fighting and burning was "planned and orchestrated by people from outside the area" is utter nonsense, the product of a blinkered police mentality.

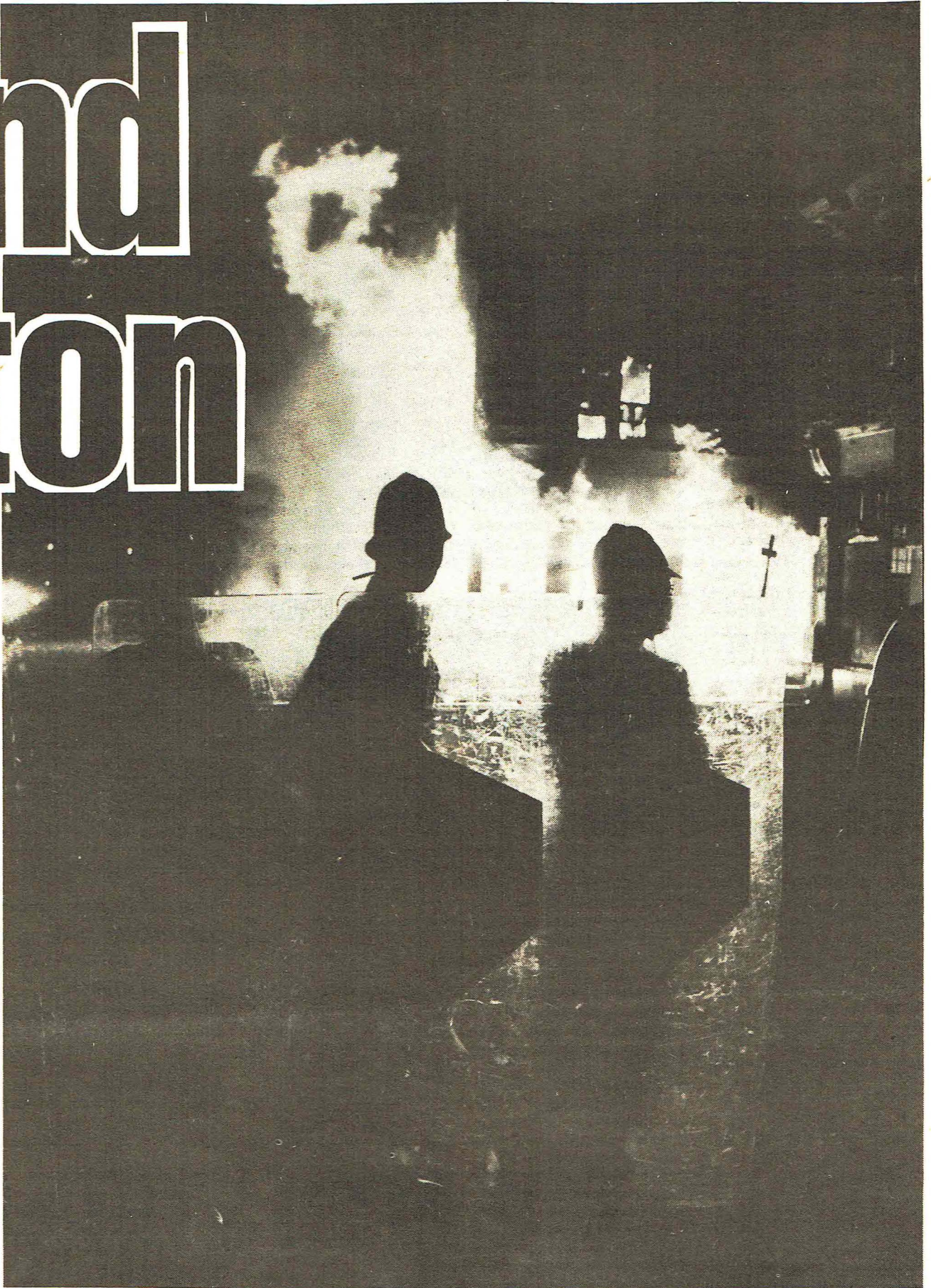
The riot was spontaneous. It was sparked by provocative police action. But the inflammable material, in terms of atrocious social conditions and consistent police oppression, has been steadily building up for years.

The fighting had no clear aims. It was a spontaneous, unorganised impulsive expression of deep-rooted anger and frustration.

Most workers, including most black workers, do not accept that street fighting, burning and looting are the way to solve the problems facing us.

But the responsibility for what happened lies squarely on the shoulders of the police and the authorities who provoked it.

The organised labour movement—the trade unions, the Labour Parties, and the Labour Party Young



Brixton. Saturday night, 11 April

Photo: J McKittrick (Militant)

Socialists—must offer an organised, mass, socialist alternative to the spontaneous, impulsive revolt of the youth.



A programme of defence and action

The labour movement must immediately and urgently demand and campaign for:

(1) AN END TO POLICE REPRESSION:

- Withdrawal of the massive police presence from the area.

- The removal of the police cordon.

- Build democratic street committees in Brixton to involve all the people of the area, and link up with the trade unions, the Labour Parties and black organisations.

- End the arbitrary stopping and searching now going on in the area.

- The immediate release of those arrested on Saturday night.

- Drop all charges.

- Disband the SPG.

- Democratic control of the Police.

(2) AN URGENT LABOUR MOVEMENT EN-QUIRY:

The trade unions and Labour Parties in the area must immediately set up a commission to investigate the background and causes of what happened.

- It should call on evidence and witnesses from all quarters, but especially from the youth and workers of the area.

- Black youth and workers must be free to give their evidence and views without fear of intimidation.

- The Commission's findings must be used in a campaign to tackle the real problems.

(3) STEP UP THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALIST SOLUTIONS TO THE SOCIAL

AND ECONOMIC CRISIS UNDERLYING THE EXPLOSION:

- Build a mass labour movement campaign to fight the people really responsible—big business and their political representatives, the Tories.

- Fight to end unemployment.

- For full training and a guaranteed job for all school-leavers.

- For an £80 minimum wage for all workers.

- For a 35-hour week.

- Fight the cuts: reverse the catastrophic spending cuts in local and central government expenditure.

- For a massive programme of public works to create more houses, schools, hospitals and other vital facilities.

- Bring down the Tory government.

- Fight to return a Labour government, not to repeat the failures of previous Labour governments, but to implement a socialist programme for the socialist transformation of society.

- Nationalise the big monopolies, with minimum

compensation on the basis of proven need. Institute democratic workers' controlled management, and introduce a socialist plan of production.

A long history of police harassment and repression

Thatcher's answer to Brixton's problems has been to step up police intervention. "The police asked for it," was the reaction even of people who condemned the burning and looting.

Tension has been building up for a long time. Last Friday (10 April), a fight broke out when local people believed that the police were holding and grilling a man who had been seriously wounded in a fight.

A crowd quickly gathered. The attack on the police indicated the extreme mistrust and hostility the police have provoked by their tactics in the area.

On Saturday there was an atmosphere of extreme tension, further built up by heavy police patrols in the

CONTINUED ON
PAGE FOUR

Defend Brixton



CONTINUED FROM PAGE THREE

area, with various incidents. But just before 5pm, two plain-clothed detectives arrested a young black in Atlantic Road.

Maureen Boyle, of the Brixton Advice Centre, described what happened: "One of the plain-clothed guys started saying 'You're nicked', he punched the black in the stomach. Everyone was saying that he'd done nothing. They dragged him into a police van. People smashed on the door of the Transit and a window got broken."

Fighting broke out, and missiles began to fly. From this a major battle escalated.

During the fighting, many people referred to incidents which have angered the black community in recent months.

No one was charged for the murder of Blair Peach in Southall; a mounting number of racist attacks (officially at least 1,000 in the last 18 months); the death of a young black, Richard Campbell, in Ashford Remand Centre; no one arrested or charged for the arson in Deptford which led to the death of 13 blacks; and there are many other incidents which could be added.

Since the Special Patrol Group went into Brixton in 1978, antagonism to police tactics has steadily built up. Arbitrary stopping, arrests, with numerous allegations of police brutality, are daily facts of life in Brixton, particularly for young blacks.

In the 'mopping up' late on

Saturday night the police left no doubt about their attitude. Both black and white youth were beaten by the police and arbitrarily arrested.

Cars, particularly those with black drivers, were arbitrarily stopped and searched in an intimidating manner.

On Saturday evening, the police chiefs were warned that to send in more police would escalate the violence. They refused to listen to black community leaders who were attempting to calm down the situation.

The central area of Brixton has long been a disaster area in terms of social conditions.

Over half of the 16 to 19 year olds are unemployed in the inner-city area of the Borough of Lambeth. Twenty percent or more are black youth. In the central Brixton area the percentage is even higher.

Large areas of Brixton should have been demolished years ago.

This area has been scheduled for re-development since 1928. Rotten slums are not being cleared because there is

area are totally inadequate. What there is, is often too expensive for poorly paid youth.

Already atrocious conditions have been made even worse under the Thatcher government. The massive rise of unemployment and the cuts are having a devastating effect on working people, despite Lambeth council's attempts to resist the full effect of cuts imposed by the Tory government.

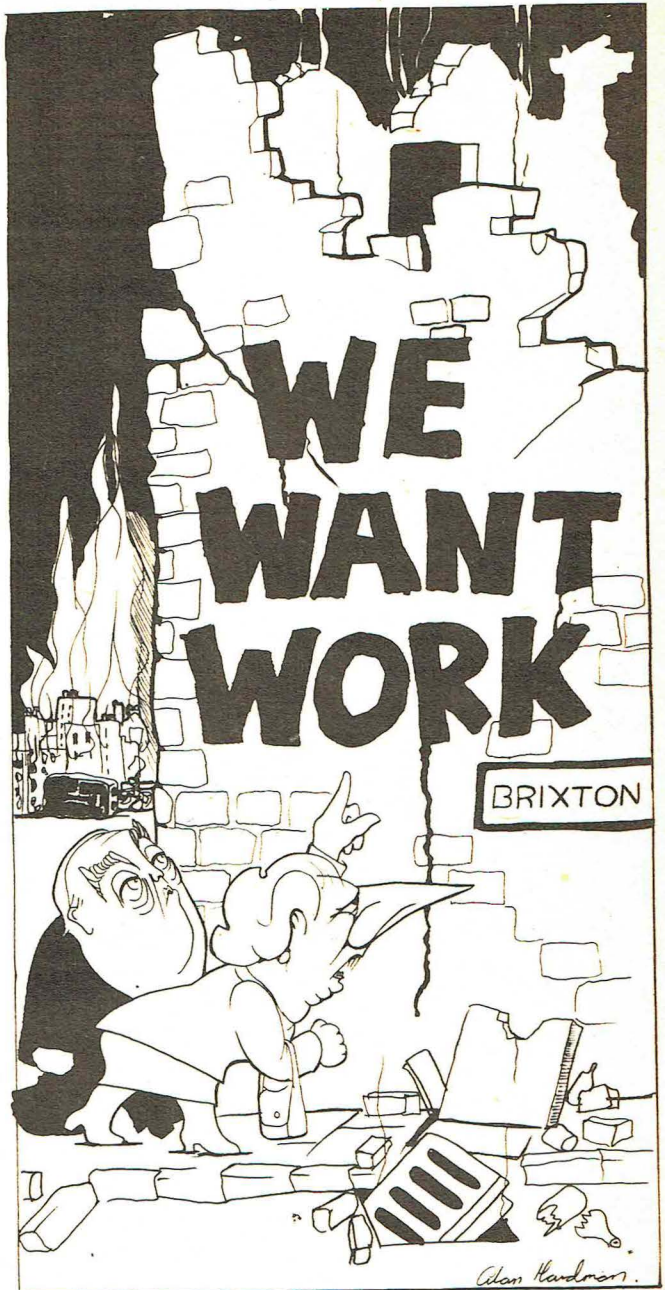
Thatcher's solution to the misery, the frustration, and the desperation of rising unemployment and increasing poverty is—to send in the Special Patrol Group in an attempt to clamp down 'law and order' on the area.

These are the things that have produced an explosion, not McNeen's mythical plotters.

The Labour Party Young Socialists has warned many times that there would be an explosion if the problems of unemployment and cut living standards, and hopeless prospects for the future were not tackled urgently.

Mobilise the labour movement! Bring down the Tories!

What has now happened in Brixton underlies the urgency of the labour movement working to build a mass movement to fight on jobs, wages, living standards, and vital services.



JUST AS I THOUGHT WILLIE POLITICAL EXTREMISTS ARE BEHIND ALL THIS



Massive police forces were sent in—with the result that there was further escalation of violence.

Now the whole area is cordoned off with a massive police presence. This does not solve one single problem. On the contrary, it can only provoke more hostility and more violence.

The police must be withdrawn. Harassment must stop.

Already a disaster area for jobs, conditions and prospects

nowhere to re-house their occupants. This is how ghettos are created.

Now the Tory government has brought new house building to a standstill. Yet there are 17,000 on the housing waiting lists, with another 400 being added every month. A proposed health centre for the area has recently been scrapped because of the cuts.

Education, too, has been hit by the cuts, when the exceptional needs of children in this area are crying out for a massive injection of resources.

Sport, recreational, and other leisure facilities in the

All the movement's resources, particularly shop stewards' committees and trade union branches, must be mobilised.

The fight to defend the people of Brixton is part and parcel of the fight to bring down the Tory government. It is a fight against big business and the rotten conditions produced by a system based on private property

and the anarchy of the market.

It is the fight to bring down the Tory government which upholds this rotten system.

It is the fight for the return of a Labour government pledged to the implementation of bold socialist policies that would bring about a fundamental shift in wealth and power from big business to working people.

POLICE CREATED STATE OF SIEGE

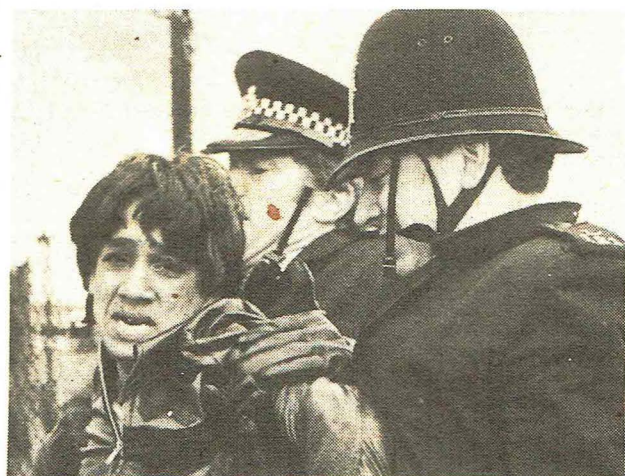
Warnings have repeatedly been given by the labour movement that there would be an explosion unless social problems were tackled—and especially if repressive police methods were not changed.

Last January, the "Report of the Working Party into Police Community Relations in Lambeth", initiated by the Labour Council, warned that the situation was at "breaking point".

The police in the borough, reported the working party, were already exercising the more rigorous powers demanded by the Metropolitan Police Commissioner in his evidence to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure.

One witness to the working party referred to the racist attacks which had been going on for the last three or four years.

There was no point, he said, in telephoning the police: "Nothing happened. I was very sad when one policeman told me: 'Perhaps they don't want you. Perhaps they don't want somebody



Police brutality at Southall 1979

Photo: MILITANT

black in this house. I thought myself that a police officer shouldn't say things like that. 'you'd better go away, they don't want you'."

While the police are zealous in cracking down on black "criminals", they are remarkably reluctant to investigate attacks on black people. In some cases, even when an assailant has been identified, the police have simply suggested that the victim take out a private summons!

In the eyes of black people, the Tories' new Nationality Bill, which implicitly lays the blame for Britain's dire social problems on the backs of the

immigrant population, can only reinforce and legitimise the biased, prejudiced attitude of large sections of the police.

The Lambeth Working Party included a senior barrister, a Tory councillor, two Labour councillors, and the Dean of Lambeth. They received 275 submissions (1,500 pages of evidence) from organisations and individuals in Lambeth.

However, Commander Adams, the local police chief, refused to co-operate with the inquiry.

The reason is not hard to

see. There is overwhelming evidence that the aim of the police is frequently, as the report suggests, to keep part of the local population in a state of siege. There is strong evidence that many police in Lambeth are out to provoke trouble and to harass and arrest blacks.

"We must have police," said one black bus driver, "because there must be law and order somewhere, but when they have to approach you in a high-style manner for no reason at all, I mean they don't approach you like they are a police officer, they are more like war officers, and I mean they could be civil to people, but they are not." "Uncivil" would be a very mild description of police behaviour in many cases!

Black witnesses also said that they had been told by the police that if they did not want to get 'nicked' they should stay indoors. Police-men like this are clearly out to impose their own unofficial curfew on the blacks and the youth of the area.

Frequently, young blacks and white youth as well, are picked up under the notorious "Sus" laws. Although these are now to be scrapped, the police will still have ample powers for picking people up,

especially if the Tories put the Royal Commission proposals on criminal procedure into effect.

One witness pointed out that there are "black parents and youngsters who themselves condemn the real criminals and yet who now would be very reluctant to report all but the most serious problem to the police." The report gives many examples which explain the justifiable fears of black people.

One black woman, ill in bed, sent her son out to buy a school blazer. "Coming out of British Home Stores he was jumped on from behind by two white men who caught him round the neck and by his arm. He was thirteen years old at the time, and quite small, this was at 9.30 in the morning; the parents weren't contacted until 7 in the evening."

Another example: "Two West Indian boys were standing at the bus stop on their own by Lloyds bank in Clapham. One boy looked a bit rough but reasonable. The other man was well dressed. They were grabbed by two policemen, pushed against the fence and searched. Nothing was said. There was no bus there, they were just standing on their own."

Harrassment and intimidation by the police is followed, in the eyes of black people, by biased treatment in the courts.

Police bias in charging offenders is confirmed by a recent study published by the "British Journal of Criminology" (January 1981) by Dr Simha Landau. His main conclusion was that "blacks involved in crimes of violence, burglary, and public disorder and other offences are treated more harshly than their white counterparts" ("Guardian 13 April).

This evidence which documents aggressive police tactics over several years, makes it clear why there has been an explosion of anger against the police in Brixton.

The Lambeth report says that "the question of workable and successful forms of democratic control raises issues of basic importance." The report however, makes no recommendation on this "political" issue.

However, in its manifesto for the Greater London Council elections this May, the Labour Party has adopted a clear policy for the democratic control over the police (see page 2). It is vital that this is now fought for by the whole labour movement.

REAL JOBS FOR ALL

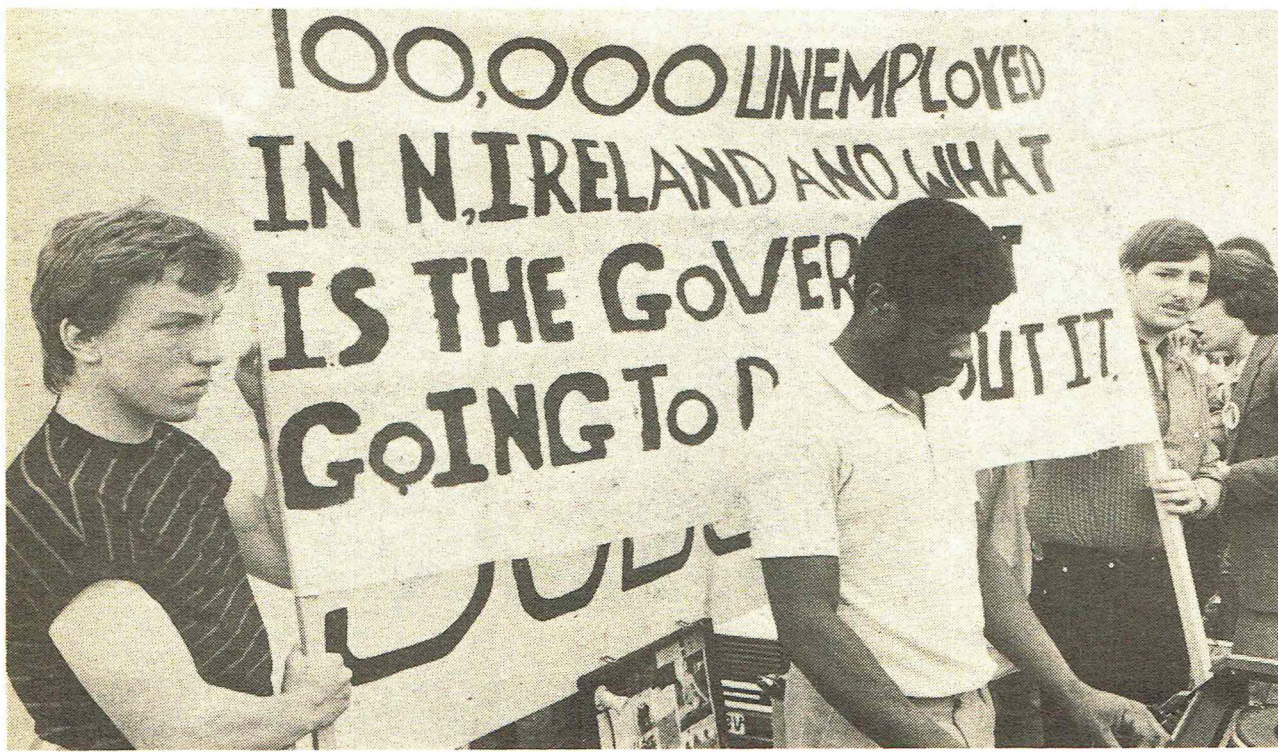


Photo: J McKittrick (Militant)

"We want real jobs—and we want them now." From all over the country young people who have been condemned to the hidden dole queues of the Youth "Opportunities" Programmes converged with other young people on London on 12 April to show their anger at the neglect of their plight.

The organisers were plainly worried about the

problem—as youth leaders in Rotherham and elsewhere they could see the effect on young workers. Unfortunately the speakers invited by the organisers could give no answer to the problems.

Instead of the pop groups promised, members of the groups spoke about unemployment as did clerics and politicians. But it was the

LPYS who provided the real alternative. Over 100 LPYS members gave out leaflets explaining our programme to everyone on the demonstration, sold 'Socialist Youth', the LPYS paper, and 'Militant', and sold badges.

Members of the YS discussed our ideas with people on the demonstration and a number of names and

addresses were obtained for local branches.

The YS also held a rally at Speakers Corner which attracted a good deal of attention. Once again a demonstration like this has shown that only the LPYS with its clear socialist programme and confidence in the labour movement is able to give a direction to such movements among working class youth.

YS IN BRIXTON

From the beginning of the Brixton events, the Labour Party Young Socialists have been actively involved, campaigning on the issues.

As it happened, the local LPYS had already arranged to put the real culprit in the dock on Saturday (11 April) with a "Trial of Thatcher".

During the work for this YS members had themselves come up against police harassment. Two were arrested for fly-posting during the week, and on Saturday Young Socialists and Labour Party members selling papers and distributing leaflets in Brixton were continually threatened by the police with arrest for "breach of the peace", "obstruction" and "selling papers without a licence".

The police were certainly out to provoke trouble, and the tension in the area following Friday night's incidents.

When the fighting broke out on Saturday evening, LPYS members were there talking to the people on the streets. Next day, they produced a leaflet (reproduced on pages 3/4) based on their own eye-witness experience of what happened.

The LPYS leaflet, distributed by members from Lambeth and other areas of London, has had a major impact. Bundles have been eagerly grabbed by young people and workers, and the ideas and demands are being read and discussed.



The only leaflet in evidence for several days, it was certainly the only one which gave a real account of events, explained the real causes, and put forward clear demands—demands which have found an enthusiastic response.

To get support for the LPYS's public meeting in Lambeth Town Hall on Wednesday, leaflets were distributed in houses throughout the Brixton area and taken to shop-stewards' committees and trade union branches in bus garages, hospitals, factories, and other work places.

It is vital that the lessons of Brixton and the Young Socialists' magnificent intervention, are fully discussed at the LPYS National Conference in Bridlington over the Easter Weekend.

By Anne Beales
(Chairman, London Region LPYS)

**Bridlington LPYS
Bridlington Branch
Labour Party
North Wolds Trades Council
Bridlington 'Militant'
supporters**

welcome all delegates and visitors to the
LPYS CONFERENCE IN
BRIDLINGTON
'Workers of the World Unite!'
For full employment, workers' control and a
decent living!

LPYS Charter for Young Workers

Available, price 30p (inc. P&P) from A. Bevan, National Youth Officer LPYS, Labour Party Headquarters, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17.

Jobs not Bull!

(CONTINUED FROM
PAGE ONE)

with under-paid 'trainees'. But this would undoubtedly meet strong union opposition as the present civil servants' action shows.

So they propose that up to 1,000 young men (no 'equality' for women here) would get "training" under normal military discipline.

Everyone knows what sergeant majors mean by "normal" discipline. It's only one step removed from the barbaric "short sharp shock" treatment the Tories have already ordered to be meted out to young offenders.

About 30% of them might get six months' training in a skill useful in civvy street. But there would still be no guarantee of a job at the end.

The rest would get general military training. This doesn't mean learning how to be a General, more like square bashing, spud bashing, cleaning floors,

Stafford

"Are you an unemployed teenager? If you want to work and want to earn money, then why not join our team?"

Posters like this can be found in almost every careers office up and down the country, advertising for school leavers to become slave labour for the bosses' system. Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) schemes just amount to hiding away the unemployed; they are no replacement for a real job.

I am one of the 'lucky' ones, working on a YOP scheme for £23.50 a week. This is about £8 or £9 more than I would receive on the dole. Great—£8 or £9 a week for working 37½ hours.

I have now been on the scheme for four of my 12 months on the course. I asked about a joining a trade union, the answer I got was "we don't have trade unions here—they cause trouble. And you have to be in manufacturing industry to be in a union, and you don't manufacture anything."

The co-ordinator of the YOP scheme in Stafford, an ex-teacher who was made redundant, said in an article in our local Tory rag, the Newsletter. "I believe in strict punctuality, dress and attitude during work hours, and strict discipline."

The YOPs in Stafford are split into groups of 6 workers. One lost a Stanley knife out of their tool kit, costing approximately £2.35—so all of the 6 workers were accused of stealing the knife and were suspended for half a day and stopped £2.35 each out of their £23.50.

Is this the sort of strict discipline working people would tolerate in 1981, or it is the sort of treatment a 10 year-old kid would get at school?

The rules and regulations of the YOPS schemes are in two booklets issued the supervisors. In one it states you cannot stop any amount of money out of a worker's wage at any time. But in the other it says that is up to the supervisor if he or she wants to stop money; they can do so when ever they see fit to do so!

And what about safety? On a job creation scheme a few weeks ago, a young lad was killed on a building site. Job creation schemes are supposed to train young workers in a trade, and this lad was making tea, sweeping out the canteen and doing all the jobs that a general labourer would do.

He was not issued with a safety hat. If he had been, he might still be with us, as a gas cannister fell off the roof on his head and he died on arrival at hospital.

This is just one of the many accidents that happen but are not reported in the gutter press.

There is no proper training on YOPS or Job Creation Schemes which proves just what a waste amount of time and money they are. On YOPS you do about 2 or 3 days bricklaying and plastering unsupervised most of the time. Does this make us all builders?

All YOPS workers should fight for the demands of the LPYS for real jobs and a real future.

By Rob
Shelley

(Stafford LPYS)

and generally bulling up army establishments to the sergeant's satisfaction.

If you pass the Army selection criteria (good health, no trouble makers) you get a magnificent £23.50 a week.

Economic conscription

The armed forces have a long tradition of recruiting from the young unemployed. This is "economic conscription"

Recent television programmes have made it clear that the colonels are increasingly training their regiments for strike-breaking and to put down mass movements of the workers and youth.

Even though the TUC, voluntary organisations, and even the CBI, have opposed the scheme, the MOD may go ahead regardless of whether the MSC approves or not. There are reported to be plans now going ahead for 5,000 places.

As with the civilian version of YOPS, all the bosses care about is keeping us off the streets, out of 'trouble'. Well, this system's been causing us trouble for years, putting us on the dole and keeping us low-paid and in lousy housing.

Last Sunday's demonstration in London showed the mood of thousands of YOPS workers. The campaign spear-headed by NUPE in the North East, for an end to cheap labour and for decent conditions, must be taken up.

Young workers facing this future should fight with the Labour Party Young Socialists for full union rights for YOP trainees with union controlled schemes, for a guaranteed job at the end of training, and for trade union rates of pay and conditions.

But most of all, fight alongside us for an end to the Tories and their system which they can think of nothing better to offer us than six months in an Army barracks.

LABOUR IN ACTION

Weak lead from T.U.C.

In one area of the country, even the Salvation Army have affiliated to the local Trades Council, TUC Chairman, Alan Fisher, told a rally of East Anglian trade unionists last weekend.

Undoubtedly if the labour and trade union leadership gave a vigorous lead they could draw behind them massive support.

Hundreds of thousands of workers responded to the Scottish TUC's call for a two-hour stoppage, closing down shipyards, factories and offices throughout the country. However, there is no doubt that if a decisive lead had been given by the STUC, that action could have been even more effective and wide-ranging.

Many workers complained

Reports by
Alan McCoombes,
Jeremy Birch,
Clive Gravell
and Chris Grace

about the lack of official information and publicity—members of the train drivers union ASLE&F pointed out that whilst the unions Scottish organiser was congratulating local government union members for their turn out, members of his own union

continued to work normally, mostly unaware that a stoppage was taking place.

There was also criticism of the tactic of confining the action to a two-hour strike. This was seen by many workers as no more than a timid gesture.

As one shop steward, a member of the National Union of Tailor and Garment Workers pointed out: "A two-hour strike is seen as futile. If the STUC had called for a full day, or even a half day strike and prepared mass activity there's no doubt that almost every worker in Scotland would have responded. The main difficulty is not about convincing workers of the need to protect against the Tories, but about convincing them that there's any point in merely clocking out 2 hours early."

The anger and bitterness is there, but workers throughout the country are looking to their own organisations to lead a fightback.

In Norwich a demonstration which began with 800

people, ended with over 2,000 marching. The day before, a local firm (Lawrence Scott and Electromotors) broke all agreements with the unions and gave only two hours notice of redundancies to ninety-three workers and threatened two hundred more, unless the unions conceded a 'temporary employment scheme'.

At the rally last weekend there was massive applause when Leslie Christie, from the Civil Service unions, declared that 'we want a new Labour government, but one with socialist policies to transform society—no more tinkering with the Tories' system.

The TUC's week of action should have been used to launch a campaign to kick Thatcher out. Instead the leadership seemed more concerned to appeal to the Tory 'wets' for support. And the alternative offered to workers was a return to the policies of the Labour government of 1974-79, i.e. cuts in living standards, 'capitalism with a human face'.

Wage restraint and a revamped social contract was what Len Murray and Michael Foot advocated at the TUC rally in Birmingham. Whilst under the Tories inflation is 12½%, when Labour left office it was down to 10% "as a result of what you did between 1975 and 1979" Len Murray told Foot. Murray even regretted "what we did" apologising that wage controls broke down in the winter of 1978-79.

These leaders have completely failed to grasp the gravity of the problems they will inherit. Michael Foot claimed that there was full employment until the 1970s because "many" countries followed intelligent policies." He seemed not to appreciate the nature of the current crisis of capitalism which marks a complete break with the boom of the 1950s and 1960s. His remedy was the re-introduction of Keynesian policies and the use of North Sea oil "to invest on the scale that is required".

It was a similar story when

Len Murray spoke at Winchester. The hall where the rally was held was very far from full; most of the audience seemed to consist of trade union and Labour Party stalwarts, with a marked absence of young rank and file activists.

This was a clear reflection of the doubt about the conviction and determination of the leadership. At a time of recession and mass unemployment, workers are understandably apprehensive.

There was little in the speeches at the rally to give workers confidence. Indeed, the meeting ended in a distinctly subdued mood.

Unless, these leading Labour figures are prepared to explain the need for real socialist policies many Labour party members may be forgiven for wondering if the next Labour government will be any different from the last.



TUC march in Norwich 4 April

Photo: C Augusto (IFL)

Action's the only language Thatcher understands

'The Tories' axe throughout London, has cut hospitals, schools and social services and the Tory controlled Greater London Council has played a central role in forcing through these vicious attacks.

It has slashed transport services, whilst increasing fares at an annual rate of 58%. It has virtually abandoned housing building while massively raising rents and selling off much needed land.

Last year over 100,000 jobs were lost in London. For example, West Drayton in Uxbridge has had a number of factories closed with many people on short-time working; jobless totals rocketed by 20% in February this year. The Tories must be stopped".

All they and their big business system can offer is cuts, massive unemployment and lower living standards.

Jake Magee (right) Labour's GLC candidate in Uxbridge and 'Militant' supporter talked to Mike Lee (Uxbridge LPYS)

Ordinary people are now fighting back, the miners, have shown us what can be done, and more and more people are realising that direct action is the only language that Thatcher and Co. understand."

In London a Labour GLC could play a vital role in defending living standards by supporting the industrial and political struggles of working class people. When it tries to carry out its policies for jobs, housing and transport, there will be a fight with Heseltine and Thatcher who will oppose any policy designed to improve living standards.

A Labour GLC must also fight for the return of a Labour government committed to implementing Party policy to nationalise the financial institutions and cancel local authority debts.



In 1980/81 the Greater London Council will have paid out £435, (?) which is a colossal 42% of its total spending, to the City of London in debt charges. A Labour government as a start, could free local councils from the stranglehold of the banks and the finance houses and allow a state bank to grant interest free loans to local authorities."

To provide the resources to resolve the day to day

problems working class people face, the next Labour government must end the control of big business over industry and employment, and lay the basis for a socialist plan of production under the control of working people themselves. That's why the battle against Tory cuts, the battle for a socialist GLC is linked to the struggle for a Labour government to implement a socialist economic programme."

Support for Benn

The Labour group on Liverpool Council recently passed the following resolution by a large majority:

"Having determined a method of electing our Party leader and deputy as a democratic decision of conference, the Liverpool Group of Labour councillors defend the right of Tony Benn and any other candidate to stand for the position of deputy leader.

"In agreeing to the need for Party unity in the struggle against the Tories and other parties of big business, we see the need for those who would lead us, to clearly state their programme and policy, especially when related to Conference decisions.

"We see a contest and election, based on candidates declared programme and policy as the best way of building a Party leadership, that reflects all the Party rather than an unrepresentative minority, such as the Parliamentary Labour Party.

"We call on all National Executive Committee members to defend this right publicly, as a means of answering attempts by the capitalist-controlled media to discredit the new system."

Opposition to Witch-hunt

The attempts by the social democrats who remain in the Labour Party to launch a new witch-hunt against the left and 'Militant' in particular have drawn a quick response. Arundel CLP passed a unanimous resolution at its last meeting opposing any new witch-hunt against the 'Militant' and calling for "political differences to be debated in a tolerant and comradely fashion". The LPYS National committee noted that there had only been the mildest criticism of the Social Democrats who had left the party compared with the hysterical attacks upon those who are building the party and arguing for socialist policies. It called upon the National Executive to investigate the real enemies of Labour and report on the links that some right-wing MPs have had with the CIA, NATO, other security services, bankers, and industrialists.

Undoubtedly, other sections of the movement will also be discussing this issue in the coming period and sending in resolutions to the National Executive.

Last week's conference of the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) saw a number of significant political victories for the ideas of Marxism.

Despite this, the "Clause 4" group, an amalgam of 'left' and 'right' wing reformists, again won a majority on the National Committee.

Dissatisfaction with the performance of the past National Committee was shown in the election for Vice Chairman, where Dave Mason, the "Clause 4" candidate scraped in by three votes on transfers, after the third candidate had been eliminated. On the first vote, he had tied seventy-three all with 'Militant' supporter Steve Davies. He was the only member of the current National Committee to stand for re-election.

In the election for the Editor of the NOLS page in 'Socialist Youth', 'Militant' supporter Dave Shields was narrowly defeated 88-85. 'Militant' supporters Clive Heemskerck and Pete Mumford were elected onto the National Committee.

One of the key Conference debates was on whether part-time students should be allowed to join NOLS.

Clive Heemskerck (Leeds University) and Theresa Wrack (South Bank Poly) both explained that this proposal was a change in the orientation of NOLS towards the Further Education and Technical colleges. It would allow the voice of working class youth to be clearly heard within NOLS. Dave Wardle (Bradford College), said that his college had over 10,000 part-time students.

After a "roll-call" vote, this amendment was agreed by 94-79 votes. Every Labour Club should now put resolutions to their Constituency Labour Parties, calling on the NEC to implement this vote.

At the last NOLS Conference, a resolution was passed saying that Labour Councils should introduce rate increases to offset Tory cuts! This year, the absolutely disastrous nature of this strategy was clear—the massive rent and rate increases have hit working people hard. Pat Seery, from

By Peter Lush

Paisley Tech, said that the rent on his council house had gone up in the last year from £26 a month to £68.

Yet one of the "Clause 4" supporters still claimed that rate increases did not affect the working class! The amendment from Bradford University and Brunel University called on Labour Councils not to raise the rent and rates to counter Tory cuts, but to mobilise the local labour movement against the Tories; this was carried by two votes.

The "Alternative Economic Strategy" was passed in the economy debate, although Dave Gardner, the NOLS National secretary, described it as "a strategy of which certain elements are non socialist." However, the real political position of the "Clause 4" group was shown in the Housing debate, when they tried to remove support for 'Clause 4 Part 4' of the Labour Party Constitution from the resolution.

Conference threw out this reactionary proposal. The resolution passed on housing called for public ownership of the building supply and construction monopolies, the building societies, banks and finance houses and a socialist economic programme to make resources available to build a million homes a year.

At the last NOLS Conference, despite bitter opposition from the National Committee, Conference agreed to stand independent Labour candidates in the National Union of Students. The success of that strategy has been clearly shown, with five NOLS members being elected on to the Executive earlier this month.

However, a proposal from Coventry Poly that NOLS stand for all the 'full-time' positions on the NUS Executive, in order to win a majority, was rejected by three votes. Neil Stewart from Aberdeen College, believed



Labour students on march against Tory cuts last year

Photo: MILITANT

Turn Nols towards labour movement

such a strategy "would cause a backlash against NOLS", whilst the National Committee argued that NOLS must build from the base and win delegate elections in colleges—as if this contradicted Coventry Poly's resolution.

The decision taken by Conference, to continue with an 'independent partial slate', unfortunately gives credence to the idea that the "Left alliance" can take NUS forward. The battle continues against those fainthearts who still have no confidence that NOLS can be fully successful.

An emergency resolution supporting the initiative of Derry Trades Council to contest the May council elections was rejected by Conference, after a supporter of the tiny ultra-left sect "Workers Action" claimed that that the Trades Council was just a "Militant front" and that the only struggle going on in Ireland was for 'national liberation'. All the resolutions on Ireland were rejected by the Conference.

Despite the leadership, there is tremendous potential for NOLS to grow as is shown by the success of the NOLS candidates for the NUS Executive. However, the current "Clause 4"

leadership of NOLS have been incapable of realising this potential.

Less Clubs were represented at this year's Conference. 83 came last year, but only 64 attended this year. The number of delegates fell from 201 to 180. 31 Clubs at Conference supported 'Militant', compared to only 19 for 'Clause 4', who rely on the big university delegations for support.

In a scandalous departure from the traditions of the labour movement, they introduced the "NUS" style of debate, with speakers for or against resolutions or amendments, with speaking times limited to three minutes to move a resolution, two to speak from the floor and one to sum up.

No general debate of issues is possible, and a serious political programme cannot be outlined with such speaking times. The continual intervention of "Clause 4" National Committee speakers in debate showed how few delegates were prepared to speak in favour of their position. The NC reports on Youth Unemployment and the British Youth Council—two major areas of their work—were rejected.

A section of delegates supported an "unaligned" slate, which opportunistically claimed to break the "sterile" debate within NOLS. That these people were not serious about changing NOLS is shown by the fact that at least half their supporters—including the handful of delegates supporting "Workers Action"—transferred their votes to the 'Clause 4' candidates, or openly supported them when one of their own candidates was not standing.

Instead of building firm links with the labour movement, to organise a united fight back against the Tories, NOLS has been drawn into the middle class environment of the student movement. The task now for 'Militant' supporters within NOLS is not just to win NOLS back to the programme of Marxism, but to the labour movement itself.

The enormous potential for NOLS remains, despite the present leadership, and 'Militant' supporters must continue to build support and new Labour Clubs, especially in the FE colleges, if NOLS is to be transformed into a fighting organisation.

Support N.Ireland Workers' Candidates

Three Northern Ireland Trades Councils have made history by deciding to field candidates in the forthcoming local government elections on 20 May.

Derry Trades Council (see Militant, 3 April) have so far selected six candidates.

Each of the five wards in the city will have at least one Trades Council candidate, so that at last every voter will have the choice of voting for a representative of a workers' organisation, as opposed to the usual Orange or Green Tories and bigots.

By Dennis Tourish

All the candidates are leading trade union activists, many with a record of activity in the movement stretching back to the early 1960s. The six include two of the Trades Council officers, Cathy Harkin of the National Union of Public Employees who is chairperson, and Bill Webster from the General and Municipal Workers Union, who is the secretary.

In Antrim the local trades council has set up an Antrim Labour League, and this body has selected one candidate who will be standing in

a large working-class area. The candidate, Sean Gibbons, is a T&GWU shop steward from one of the largest factories in the Antrim area.

Fermanagh Trades Council is putting forward one candidate in the town of Iniskillen under the banner of Fermanagh Labour League. He is Thomas Campbell, the secretary of the Trades Council and also a member of the T&GWU.

At last the working class of Northern Ireland are being offered the beginnings of a political alternative.

Both in Derry and in Antrim a socialist programme has been adopted and will

form the basis of the election manifesto. The Antrim Labour League has clearly taken up the call for the building of a trade-union based labour party in Northern Ireland.

In Fermanagh the programme is still under consideration.

These trades councils—particularly Derry, with its courageous decision to stand candidates under its own banner in every area of the city, from the predominantly Catholic Creggan and Bogside districts to mainly protestant Waterside area—have shown the way forward.

In Northern Ireland there is no Labour Party. The trade union leaders for years have declared themselves "non-party political" and have allowed the bigots to monopolise politics.

Now this monopoly has been challenged. A first step towards a class party to unite and represent the working

class has been taken.

Like the first socialist activists who, at the turn of the century, fought for political representation in Britain, these trades councils, especially Derry, are pioneers of the labour movement. Their pioneering work, however, is being conducted under the more difficult conditions of sectarian violence.

They deserve every support, encouragement and assistance from the British labour movement. Financial support, particularly to Derry which is putting up the most candidates, is required.

Messages of support and donations should be sent to: John Duffy, 6 Nicholson Square, Derry.

S Marshal, c/o Inniskillen Telephone Exchange, Iniskillen, County Fermanagh. Glenn Simpson, 9 Somerset Parade, Rathnaw, Antrim (for the Antrim Labour League).

Militant Readers Meetings

MANCHESTER

"Civil Service—for the full claim". Speaker: Steve Appleton (CPSA Leeds). Wednesday 22 April, 8.30 pm, Star and Garter, Fairfield Street, Manchester.

LIVERPOOL

"Which way forward for the Labour Party?" Speaker: Terry Harrison (prospective Parliamentary candidate, Liverpool Edge Hill). 7.00 p.m. Thursday 23 April, AUEW House, Furnival Gate.

POOLE

Marxist Discussion Group, Tuesday 28 April, 8.00 pm. Subject: The Labour Party. Speaker: Jill Hayes (Southampton LP). Further details, telephone Parkstone 733989/732090.

SHEFFIELD

"Which Way forward for the Labour Party?" Hear: Terry Harrison (prospective parliamentary candidate, Liverpool Edge Hill) 7pm Thursday 23 April AEU House, Furnival Gate, Sheffield 1

EDINBURGH

Defeat the Tories. Socialist Policies for Labour'. Speakers: John Hepburn, Deputy TGWU Convenor, Talbot, Linwood. Ted Grant 'Militant'. Wednesday 22nd April 7.30pm. Trade Union Centre, Picardy Place, Edinburgh.

CHESTER-LE-STREET

'Poland—the struggle for a workers' democracy'. Speaker, Dave Cotterill. Chester-Le-Street Labour Club, Sunday 26th April 7.30pm. Further details phone Wally Scott 0385-887603

SOUTHERN AREA SCHOOL

Sunday May 3 and Bank Holiday Monday May 4. Three speakers, social and food. Hotel Bed and Breakfast at Danville Hotel (on sea front), Cliftonville, Margate. Only £7.50 (same as last year). Please book early as capacity limited. Write/phone K Nicholson, 25 Grotto Road, Cliftonville, Margate, Kent (0843 291293). Speakers: Ray Apps 'What is Marxism?', Dudley Edwards '1926 General Strike'. Debate—Militant versus Communist Party, 'Perspectives for Britain'.

20th

LABOUR
YOUTH
CONFERENCE

Youth must organise!

Working class youth have suffered the brunt of Tory attacks.

One million are out of work. Half a million a year are kept off the dole queue by the forced cheap labour of the Youth Opportunities Programme.

Hundreds of thousands more are given a measly grant for full time education in the colleges. Yet one in five of this year's graduates will be unemployed.

Many see no end to the downward spiral of low pay, no pay, overcrowded housing and expensive recreation. Drug-taking, alcoholism, mysticism and petty crime are on the increase.

The labour movement, however, has the strength to eliminate these problems. Youth must organise!

Young workers have played an active part in many of the labour movement's struggles. Apprentices waged strikes against the poor conditions and wages of the indenture system, which played an important part in the building of the LPYS.

For decades, however, the movement was weakened by the lack of an organised youth wing.

Since 1929, when the first national Labour League of Youth conference was held, the youth section has been a radical force—and paid the price. Purges, suspensions, political bewilderment and arbitrary rules designed to stifle the voice of youth have dogged our history.

But today's Labour Party Young Socialists have shown what is possible if the Labour Party and trade unions gave the YS full and material encouragement.

LPYS members who attended this year's TUC Youth Congress won the sup-

By Nick Toms
(Vice-Chairman,
LPYS National
Committee)

port of 90% of delegates when they called on the TUC to introduce a two-day conference, with individual unions allowed to submit resolutions; the election of delegates and of a TUC Youth Committee to lead campaigns. Without these measures trade union youth are hamstrung in their efforts to lead campaigns against the special problems facing youth at work.

This Easter sees our 20th annual conference. After 21 years the LPYS is now beginning to emerge as a force among working class youth.

Eight thousand mainly young workers filed into the LPYS contingent on the Labour Party's November 29th march in Liverpool. They demonstrated that youth will rally to the banner of socialism and the ideas of Marxism.

Since that time they have helped to swell the ranks of the LPYS and push the YS to record size. There are now 454 local branches. Up to 300 will be participating in this LPYS conference making it the biggest for fifteen years.

Since 1979, sales of the LPYS paper, now called 'Socialist Youth', have doubled and attendances at the regional conferences are up by 50 per cent.

This growth has been achieved by LPYS branches taking up the day to day problems of working class youth and showing in practice how

they link with the need for socialism.

Branches in many areas have been especially active in many attempts to win major concessions for the unemployed. Cheap or free access to council leisure facilities and local cinemas, unemployed day centres and other gains have been won.

Campaigns against local authority spending cuts and pickets of bosses' junkets have exposed the hypocritical Tory appeals for 'sacrifice'. 'Militant' has covered all these issues and been the guiding light for the majority of LPYS members over the last ten years.

The ideas which have built the LPYS are the ideas of Marxism. We have shown that Marxism, combined with the fighting spirit of youth, provides the programme and strength to tackle our problems and build our organisation.

In contrast, organisations which long ago rejected Marxist ideas, such as the Young Communist League, have withered. The YCL now claims just 500 members.

The response our ideas can win was shown by the last Labour Party youth TV broadcast in 1980, which netted a record 2,000 applicants to join the Labour Party.

Unfortunately, however, the LPYS is still having to fight doggedly for proper financial resources. Last year's budget of £14,000 was overspent by £9,000; the YS does not receive enough money to meet its daily needs, let alone campaign.

The Labour Party's National Executive must be pressed to honour its agreement to give the LPYS a £50,000 budget.

The extreme right wing in the Labour Party, when they

attack the LPYS, do not dare to admit that they have been trying to strangle it for the last ten years. Nor do they mention their undemocratic rule of the LPYS between 1966 and 1970.

Then the LPYS branches could not even choose delegates for the YS conference — the Constituency Labour Parties did it for them. Roy Jenkins' deadly touch shrivelled the YS conference into a rump of 500 people and barely 100 delegates.

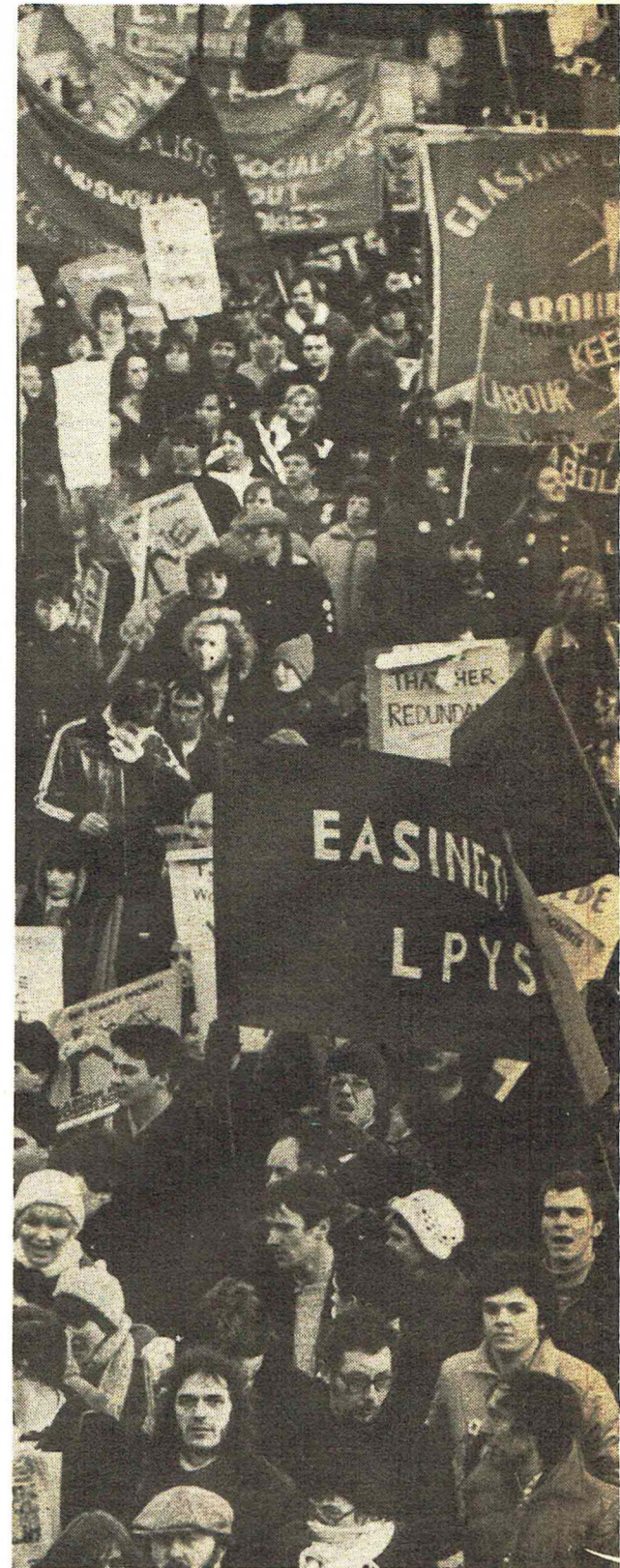
The situation is now vastly different, with the Labour Party and many unions moving left, and the LPYS is going from strength to strength.

The LPYS National Committee have drawn up a brief 15-point Youth Charter of demands (based on the Charter for Young Workers) for inclusion in the next Labour Party manifesto. The task of the YS now is to mount a nationwide campaign on this Charter to get backing from trade unions, shop stewards' committees, Labour Parties, students' unions and youth groups.

One of the Charter's demands is on the Youth Opportunities Programme. Singling out this issue, the National Committee are pressing for a campaign for trade union rates of pay, the right to organise and the right to proper training for YOPers.

Once again every YS branch is called on to get down to the young people involved and to organise agitation alongside the various trade unions.

'Agitate, Educate and Organise' is still the main slogan for Labour's youth. Agitate to show the need to fight. Educate to lead the fight. Organise to win it.



Part of the 8,000 strong LPYS contingent on the Labour Party de

Lawrence Coates

'Militant' supporter Lawrence Coates is standing for the LPYS position on the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party.

We urge all LPYS branches who support

the ideas of 'Militant' and see the need for the LPYS to campaign vigorously on a clear socialist programme, to vote for Lawrence Coates as the LPYS representative on the Labour Party

POLAND:
'We only condemn those who distort socialism'

By Kevin Ramage
(LPYS National
Chairman)

The strike leader at the "Paris Commune" shipyard in Gdya was 21 years old. He had been out of work for four years because of his fight for independent trade unions.

Young Polish workers have come to the fore, channelling their anger, confidence and energy into militant action.

The magnificent movement of the Polish workers is living testimony of their determination to wipe out privilege and corruption, and shake the rotten bureaucratic elite which controls the Polish state.

The LPYS National Committee document, "Poland and Workers Democracy," opens with a statement typical of the aspirations of the workers: "We speak on

behalf of the 40,000 workers of the Lenin steelworks.... Today our union has 7 million members who believe that socialism is a system of social justice. Our activity does not impair the foundations of socialism in our country. We have only condemned those who have distorted its basic tenets."

This makes a mockery of the lies and distortions of Brehznev and other top bureaucrats who label the struggles as the work of "counter-revolutionaries". This same lie was spread in 1956 in an attempt to justify the crushing of the Hungarian workers' uprising.

The bureaucrats fear the independent movement of the workers. Their fears are intensified by the slow down or stagnation of all the East European economies, and the increasing unrest provoked by shortages, queues and inefficiency.

Poland has felt the chill winds badly; output has fallen by six per cent in two years. Last year, agricultural production declined by twelve per cent, and electricity production fell by ten per cent.

The switch of resources from investment to consumer production (an attempt to quell the unrest) means investment will fall from 28% of the national income to 14% over the next three years. This will lead to further stagnation and economic decline.

Yugoslavia, where inflation is rocketing, is often paraded as more 'liberal' and 'decentralised' than the other Stalinist states. Nonetheless, eleven people were shot dead in recent riots over the treatment of the Albanian national minority, and there have been demonstrations of students about the quality of food.



Demonstration in Liverpool last year

Photo: MILITANT

NO FUTURE WITH THATCHER

Five years ago most of us would have agreed prospects were uncertain. Now, after two years of Thatcher government, young people face certainty.

They have no future — not on the basis of capitalism.

By Lawrence Coates
(LPYS National Committee)

Last year one in ten manufacturing jobs were blotted out, 7,000 firms went bust and at one point the jobless total was rising at the rate of 100,000 a month. As unemployment hurtles towards an official figure of three million, the grisliest predictions of the last few years are becoming fact.

The Tories and big business justify their blitz on the working class as 'tough medicine' we have to swallow if their system is to be cured. But these youth people, who point an accusing finger at lazy workers' are themselves responsible for the crisis.

Last year investment in manufacturing industry dropped by ten per cent. That trend is expected to continue this year.

The bosses feel no inclination to invest more while profitability is so low. At the time of the last recession in 1975, for example, gross trading profits were in real terms more than three times their present value.

Unless the rate of profit in manufacturing industry, currently two per cent, (after interest and rent payments) is jacked up to around ten per cent, the bosses are unlikely to even consider greater investment. This has been made plain by the bosses' organisation, the Confederation of British Industry, who demand as a remedy the ramming down of workers living standards.

Even by the bosses' own admission, we are to suffer 'ten years of austerity'. By 1982 four out of five school leavers will go straight onto the dole.

One forecast, not disputed by Thatcher's ministers, sees unemployment snowballing

to five million by 1990.

The LPYS National Committee Manifesto on Unemployment and the Capitalist crisis, lays out the socialist alternative to this real-life horror story. It points to the need for the labour movement to launch a counter-offensive, pressing for bold socialist measures to break the bosses' hold over the economy.

Labour must expose the 196 directors who control the two hundred giant companies that in turn account for 85% of production.

These individuals, elected only by themselves, have decisive power over the economy and the lives of ordinary people.

Resolution 33 at the LPYS conference "notes with pleasure the decision of the 1980 Labour Party conference to campaign for an aggressive socialist economic policy," a policy based on Tribune's Alternative Economic Strategy.

No socialist would disagree with the demands of last year's Labour Party conference for far-reaching reforms. But the question remains: how are they to be achieved? Sustained improvements are impossible within the limits of crisis-hit capitalism.

The resolution goes on to demand "planned international trade". What does this mean? Either we fight for a nationalised planned economy, which would mean a state monopoly of foreign trade combined with planning for production, supply, wages, etc. Or this is just a euphemism for capitalist protectionism.

Import controls, with

capitalism at society's helm would not mean rational socialist planning. As resolution 101 argues, "the demand for restricting imports is a nationalist rather than a socialist one."

British industry is taking a hammering at the hands of its foreign rivals because for years the bosses have failed to invest.

During the period 1970-74, for example, annual investment in manufacturing industry was £450 per head of population in West Germany, in France £540, while in Britain it was just £240. Workers in Britain use machinery on average 35 years old.

Those who push the idea of import controls envisage the working class and the capitalists rallying together in a bid to save jobs. By limiting imports, British firms are to be given a breathing space during which—it is hoped—investment will be stepped up and industry re-equipped.

If investment has been minimal in the past, despite the need to beat off overseas competitors, what chance is there that the huge sums needed to re-vitalise British industry will be invested when the bosses enjoy a protected home market with no fear of more efficient competitors?

In many cases they would just seize the opportunity to lift prices and rake in more loot—at our expense.

While offering no answer for working people, the demand for import controls is a dangerous blind alley. It is a recipe for splitting the working class at home and internationally, siding them instead with their capitalist exploiters.

Even some Tories back this demand. They can see the opportunity this provides for drumming up nationalism and diverting attention from the real cause of unemployment—their system.

Rather than masking the issues at stake, Labour's youth must hammer home the truth. Any solutions that benefit the bosses must be at our expense, and vice-versa.

This has slipped the attention of those who support the Campaign Against Youth Unemployment (see resolutions 95 and 110). CAYU's policies are an attempt to solve the burning problems of unemployment within the shrinking confines of capitalism.

This body calls for 'broad-based alliances' not as a complement but, it seems, as a substitute for class-based policies. They enjoy the backing of the young Liberals, the youth wing of the bosses' reserves—evidence enough that they in no way threaten the vital interests of big business.

Resolution 33 also calls for increased public spending to create more jobs, a demand any socialist would vote for with both hands. But while the Marxists in the LPYS shed no tears for the rich businessmen who stand to lose from any proposed wealth tax, it has to be understood that this would lead to a further dip in profitability leading to less investment and even a 'strike of capital'.

The alternatives are to tax workers more heavily, further screwing down living standards, or to print more money—money which is not matched by increased production. This would pave the way for higher inflation, negating the benefits of increased public expenditure.

The only real way to provide the resources for more homes, schools and better services is by an enormous increase in production which is only possible if the labour movement wrests control of the major industrial concerns and banks from the clutches of the capitalist class.

The nationalisation of the two hundred major companies, banks and insurance firms under democratic workers' control and management, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need, is essential to enable a socialist plan of production to be implemented". (Resolution 26).

This is the only way forward. A socialist plan of production would facilitate the use of science and technology to the benefit of working people, ending unemployment once and for all!

es for NEC

NEC.

Laurance is a member of the Leicester South LPYS, 22 years old, and is on the district council of his union, the National Union of Public Employees. He has been a

member of the LPYS since 1974, of the East Midlands Regional Committee since 1978 and a member of the National committee of the LPYS for two years.

Faced with their own problems, the bureaucracies fear nothing more than a spreading of the Polish workers' struggle.

Behind the threats of invasion by Russia and the other Stalinist bureaucracies, at present they appear to have decided against direct military intervention. They still feel able to control the situation and prevent the overthrow of the Polish regime.

They are exercising this control by leaning on the leaders of the trade union 'Solidarity'. By a combination of intimidation and 'reasonableness' they hope to woo leaders such as Lech Walesa, turning them into policemen of the movement they are supposed to represent.

The Catholic church is a major influence, reflecting its historical identification with Polish nationalist asp-

irations. The weight of the Church hierarchy has been thrown behind demands for 'calm', as another prop for the regime.

The dissidents, who won the support of workers in their organisational efforts to defend militants and workers' rights, have professed on many occasions that they do not seek the overthrow of the regime. These attempts to reassure the regime will not, however, save them from its full wrath if the workers' struggle loses momentum.

As long as the 'moderate' wing of Solidarity appears able to keep the situation under control, the Russian bureaucracy will hold back from an invasion. But new provocations such as the recent beating up of twenty workers, which led to this month's General Strike movement, could spark a new explosion.

Once begun, such an outburst could lead towards the overthrow of the bureaucracy.

To prevent this the bureaucracy would play its last card—invasion. Even then, stability would not be guaranteed: an invasion would undoubtedly lead to an uprising, with large sections of the Polish army fighting beside the workers.

Walesa and others have used the fear of an invasion to hold the movement in check. But it is their nationalistic, reformist approach which would undermine the basis for a class appeal to Russian soldiers.

A leadership with an understanding of the need for a political revolution to overthrow the bureaucracy, and for the establishment of a regime of healthy workers' democracy, would have an instant class appeal. Explained to the Russian and

East European soldiers in internationalist terms, this could shatter the armies of intervention as effective tools of Stalinism, and spread the struggle for workers' democracy.

One thing above all is clear—there is no 'middle road' to achieving permanent reforms. Despite the hopes expressed by Walesa—"Freedom must be gained step by step. Freedom is a food which must be carefully administered when people are too hungry for it," the present uneasy co-existence cannot continue indefinitely.

The Polish regime has made its aim clear: either to absorb the independent unions, or wait for the most favourable opportunity to smash them. But new conflicts loom.

In 1980, personal income rose by an estimated 20%, but while agricultural out-

put declines, total foreign debt charges will take a massive 85% of exports. New shortages, new queues, and new conflicts between the workers and the bureaucracy will be inevitable.

The bureaucracy are hoping to 'ride out the storm', until the workers' movement begins to tire. Then they will try to behead Solidarity of its most militant leaders, and incorporate it into the official apparatus—as they did with the workers' councils established in the 1956 Polish uprising.

Undoubtedly, however, sections of workers see this looming catastrophe, and are drawing political conclusions from the struggles. In the discussions and meetings, already some must be concluding that they need a thorough going political revolution to completely overthrow the bureaucracy.

It is the duty of the LPYS and Marxists in Britain to give every support to that struggle. The Bridlington LPYS resolution on the document calls for: "the LPYS NC to lead a campaign inside the trade union and labour movement to: 1. Establish links between the British labour movement and Poland's Solidarity; 2. Explain the true nature of the recent developments in Poland; 3. Give full support to the independently organised workers' movement in Poland and the Soviet Bloc."

Our message must be, as the resolution declares: "the establishment of a true socialist workers' democracy will herald the downfall of the Stalinist regimes in the Soviet Bloc and that will shine like a beacon to the struggle of the working class to overthrow their own ruling class."

So much
for
democracy

Ron Brown, Labour MP for Edinburgh, Leith, was last week (8 April) "named" by the speaker, and subsequently suspended from the House.

This arose from Ron Brown's accusation that the Solicitor-General for Scotland, Mr Nicholas Fairbairn, had been lying when he answered a question put by him on 11 February.

Ron Brown had asked him to explain why the so-called "Glasgow Two" had been arrested, detained and charged under the Official Secrets Act for selling newspapers in the street, and then, after a protest from Labour MPs and other activists, convicted on a charge of breach of the peace.

On 11 February, the Scottish Solicitor-General had told the Commons that, "The two persons in question were not charged under Prevention of Terrorism Act...they were arrested under the Act."

But the Procurator Fiscal Deputy's warrant (11 August 1980) addressed to the Sheriff of Glasgow and Strathkelving, authorising searches and detention by the police, says, "That from information received by the petitioner, it appears, and he accordingly charges, that (the "Glasgow Two") did (...) solicit and invite financial and other support for a proscribed organisation, namely the Irish Republican Army; contrary to the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1976, section 1 (1) (b)."

On the day Ron Brown was suspended, Fairbairn declined to say how many people selling newspapers in Scotland had been charged with "breach of the peace" during 1980, on the grounds that the statistics "do not disclose the circumstances of the offence."

"Militant" in no way supports the policies or methods of the Provisional IRA. But clearly, as Ron Brown says, "This shows how the authorities can use the law to harass and intimidate anyone who opposes their policies."

Ron Brown was suspended for "gross discourtesy to the chair". Yet in replying to him on 11 February, Fairbairn said: "the hon. Member (i.e. Ron Brown) is sympathetic to a revolutionary Communist group elsewhere which is sympathetic to the attitude of the Russians."

But Ron Brown, Fairbairn said, "should have better judgement than to suggest...that there is prejudice on the part of the prosecuting authorities in Scotland against anyone of any political party!"

"So much for democracy!" was Ron Brown's comment as he left the Chamber.



Workers on Belfast demonstration in TUC/ICTU Week of Action, 11 April PHOTO: Eamonn O'Dwyer (IFL)

**FERMANAGH
BY-ELECTION**

CLASS UNITY POLICIES THE ONLY ANSWER

The result of the by-election in Fermanagh and South Tyrone can be summed up in one phrase—there was no alternative.

By Peter Hadden

Over 30,000 people voted for republican hunger-striker Bobby Sands, while 29,000 voted for official unionist, Harry West.

In neither case do the votes cast indicate mass support for the policies of the contestants.

Catholics voted for Bobby Sands not to endorse the policies and tactics of the Provisional IRA, but to register their sympathy for the prisoners' protest against brutal conditions in the H-Block of the Maze—and because the only alternative, in any case, was the Unionist, the local landowner, Harry West. Similarly, the Protestants voted for West, despite his personal unpopularity, because his opponent was a convicted member of the IRA.

The most accurate summary of the poll is that over

30,000 people voted against Harry West, while only 29,000 voted against Bobby Sands.

Not does the result indicate a dramatic rise in support for sectarianism in Northern Ireland. Recent weeks have demonstrated just the opposite.

Paisley's attempt to drum up support for his "Carson Trail" have been a flop. The hunger strike started by Bobby Sands, subsequently joined by three other prisoners, entirely failed to draw the mass response aroused by the pre-Christmas hunger-strike.

This Wednesday (15 April), the National H-Block Committees have called for a 'general strike' in support of the hunger strike. The response to this call, which according to all indications will be minimal, will give a much better indication of

the feeling of working people on the questions of the Fermanagh poll.

Sectarian tension has been on the wane in recent months. Instead, there has been the development of a class movement and of united class action by the workers against the policies of the Tories.

Most recently this was shown on Saturday (11 April), when thousands of trade unionists marched at various centres as part of the Trades Union Council/Irish Congress of Trade Unions Week of Action against unemployment. A Belfast march of some 3,000 was one of the largest and liveliest trade union demonstrations seen in the city for many years.

However, Bobby Sands' victory has brought both the issue of the hunger strike and the danger of a temporary escalation of sectarianism to the fore.

The election has been followed by ominous statements from the loyalist Ulster Defence Association that it no longer considers there to be any moderate Catholics. The Provisional IRA, on the other hand, have threatened to put up more prisoners in the local government elections on 20

May, a development which would hinder the attempts of trades councils to have workers' candidates elected, by threatening to turn these elections into sectarian polls.

Sands has been elected and the labour movement must oppose the efforts of the Tories and Unionists to expel him from parliament, efforts which seem to have been dropped for the time being.

If Sands was "unseated" it could only give credibility to the Provos, who would probably put up another prisoner in the subsequent election.

The result would be a further heightening of sectarianism. The real lessons of his election victory is the need for a Labour Party in Northern Ireland. Only when workers are given a class alternative at the polls will the business of voting according to religion be ended.

A settlement to the H-Block dead-lock must also be found. If the demands of the Labour Party NEC for a decent prison regime for all prisoners, including those in H-Block and Armagh, were implemented this could provide a basis for the end of the hunger strike.

These demands include a call for the right of all prisoners to wear their own clothes and the right to negotiate the choice of prison work.

Support for such demands is not akin to support for the Provisionals or for the sectarian National H-Block Committees, whose activities are to be condemned.

But while opposing these sectarian organisations, the labour movement cannot ignore the repression of the state forces both inside and outside the prisons. The methods which in the past were solely reserved for the workers of Northern Ireland will in the future be used against workers in Britain, as the police intervention in Brixton has shown.

The answer to both repression and the sectarianism must be a redoubled campaign by the labour movement in Northern Ireland and Britain for the unity of the working class around socialist policies.

The sectarian poll in Fermanagh must be taken as a spur to the trade unions in Northern Ireland to build a trade union based party of labour now.

Cardiff South East

Around the country, the great 'democrats' of Labour's right wing are determined to destroy the spirit of conference decisions on mandatory re-selection.

Predictably, nowhere is this more true than in the now notorious Cardiff South East Labour Party. In their determination to secure a 'short list of one', namely James Callaghan, the right-wing dominated General Management Committee (GMC) voted to

accept a time-table of just five weeks, including Easter and the local election period.

What is more, delegations have been ruled 'out of order' by the Regional Officer of the Labour Party, Hubert Morgan. The most scandalous example is that of Cardiff branch of the Socialist Education Association (SEA) which has had delegates to the constituency since 1976.

In January, the branch

paid the level of affiliation fees which it was asked to pay in writing by Cardiff City Labour Party. After the delegations had been frozen for re-selection, Hubert Morgan disqualified the SEA's three delegates to the Party because the City Party had asked for the wrong affiliation fees.

It will come as no surprise to readers of this paper that these three delegates are 'Militant' supporters! With the backing of Cardiff City

Labour Party and the SEA General Secretary, Graham Lane, the Cardiff SEA branch are appealing to Labour's National Executive about the decision.

Just remember this story whenever you hear the right wing tell stories about 'left-wing manoeuvres.'

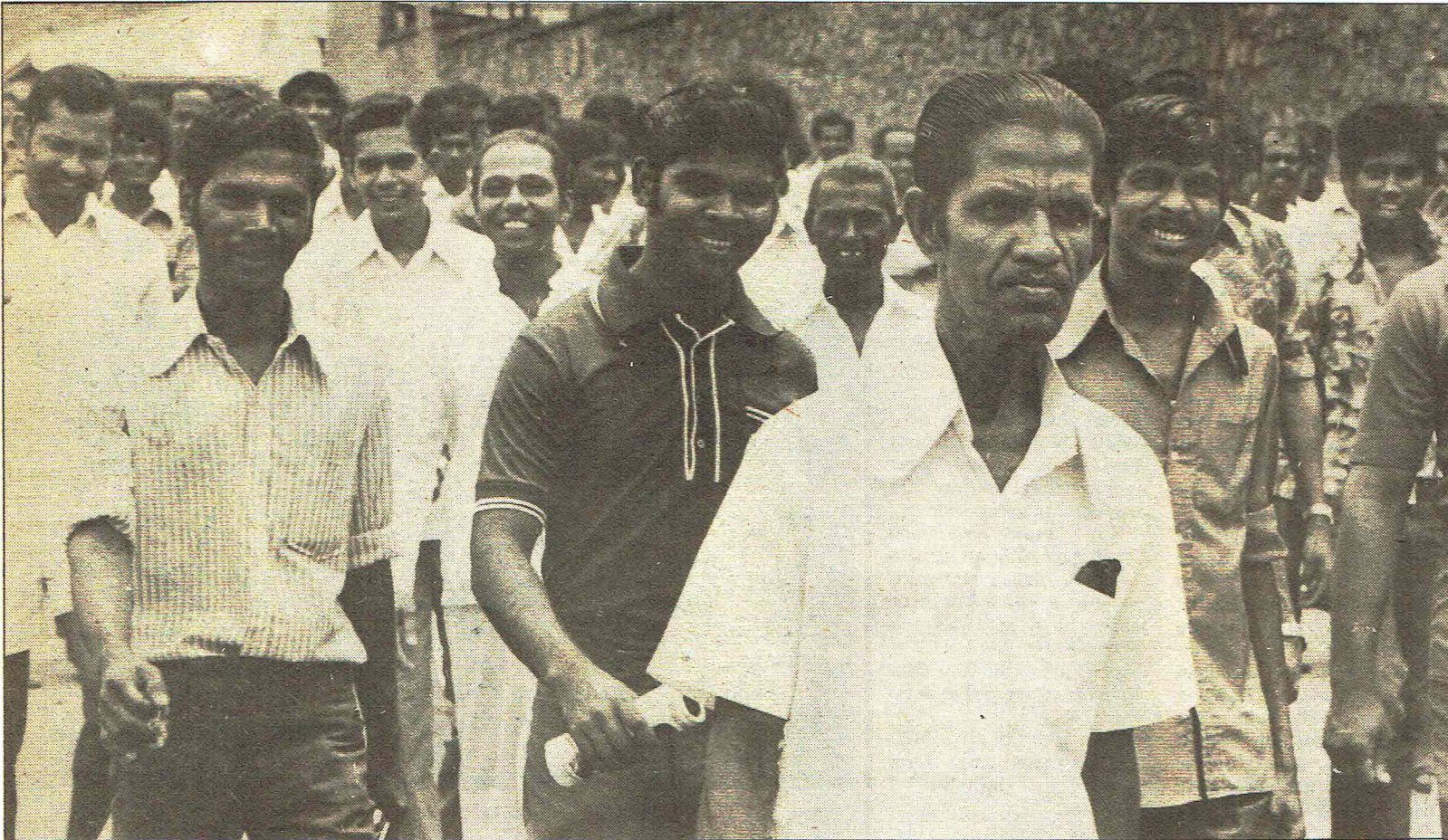
By Andrew Price

(Cardiff SEA and 10 years a delegate to Cardiff SE CLP)

RIGHT MANOEUVRES

Emergency

Demand for 'Militant International Review' No. 21, Winter 1980-81 has—unfortunately for new readers—completely outstripped our supplies. We appeal to readers to return all unsold copies as soon as possible. Please post them to 'Militant' or hand them over to your regular 'Militant' seller.



Lever Bros. workers on general strike in Colombo last July

Photo: J McKittrick (Militant)

SRI LANKA:

Attack on workers continue-

The massive attacks by the government and bosses on the living standards and democratic rights of Sri Lanka's workers has not slowed down.

By Oswin Fernando

prominent in aiding their staff brothers.

The management continued to encourage the disruptive group among the staff to form a rival union (the Lever Brothers Independent Staff Union.) They were allowed to use the Company address and telephone number on letterheads, hold committee meetings in Company premises in working hours though it was not a recognised union.

They even got permission to hold their inaugural meeting in Company premises publicised on the Company notice board. After protests by the recognised union Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union permission was withdrawn and the meeting cancelled.

Management were playing for time to smash the Branch of the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union. Having previously delayed the negotiations, the management acceded to long standing union demands for an advance of two thousand rupees. They added a proviso however, that the Union had ceased to represent the Staff, and

management could not negotiate with them on staff matters.

This was not true as only 40% is needed in the Private Sector for recognition of a union, a position accepted even by the Employers' Federation of which Lever Bros. (Ceylon) Ltd., is a member.

This announcement evoked a spontaneous reaction on the part of the factory workers—a protest which management subsequently called an 'unruly demonstration'.

Trying to behead the union

As a result of the General Strike all workers had been placed on six months' probation with effect from 1st August last year. On 30th January the last working day of the probation period, forty six leaders were served with letters of discontinuance, alleging that their conduct in that time had been totally unsatisfactory.

In fact there had not been one complaint either written or oral against any of these forty six workers. Their service with the Company prior to the General Strike ranged from two to thirty

years. Management aimed to behead the Branch Union.

Four hundred other workers have also had their period of probation extended by three months with effect from 1st February.

Memories of the General Strike were revived on the morning of 30 January, when the letters of discontinuance were served. Police were out in full force in the neighbourhood of the factory and the Branch Union Office, housed in a building owned by the Company.

With the police in attendance the management called for the keys of the Union Office, but they were reminded that the Branch Union has enjoyed this privilege since 1971 and the withdrawal of the privilege could only take place on an agreement between both parties. It is one of the gains of past struggles.

Political struggle

Unilever which seeks to exhibit what they call the 'Lever Family' as the Private Sector show piece in Sri Lanka stood exposed in their multinational nakedness. The centre for workers unity set up by the United

Federation of Labour, the Government Clerical Service Union, the Local Government Clerical Service Union and the Government United Federation of Labour has launched a public campaign for the reinstatement of the victimised workers.

The Industrial Relations Division of the Labour Department has proposed to the management that victimised workers be taken back with the period of probation extended by three months, as in the case of the other 400 workers. Even this modest proposal has been rejected by the management.

Confrontation with ruling class

A mass protest meeting was held in the Colombo North industrial area. Speakers from the four organisations of the New Centre and the Students Federation addressed the meeting.

The campaign has now to be linked to a general campaign against Government attacks on jobs, living standards and democratic rights, as these events again confirm the political nature of the challenge posed to our workers.

A mass movement based on democratic unity and led by the working class is vital. In our view the confrontation between such a movement and the ruling class is inevitable in the near future.

AUSTRIA: Stability— for how long?

All over Europe the ruling class are looking with horror at the effects of the recession. A Financial Times survey of the continent in January could see little except growing unemployment, declining production, falling industrial investment and political instability.

This month the European Commission announced that industrial production throughout the EEC had slumped by 6% last year from its 1979 figure. Man-made fibres had fallen 12%, motor manufacturing 5% and metal industries associated with that industry 6%. Industrial production fell a further 1% in January 1981 to keep up the bleak picture.

One of the few regions of Europe where the capitalist analysts could see any hope for themselves was Austria. That country had suffered only a comparatively small increase in unemployment, and was seemingly only slightly ruffled by the capitalist recession.

But as Helmut Kepp of the Austrian YS [SJO] writes in a letter from Austria the years of the 'economic miracle' are gone and the working class is awakening.

A whole town was on its feet. Ten thousand people in the small Styrian steel town of Judenburg marched through the streets on 28 March protesting against the planned sacking of hundreds of workers at the nationalised VEW steel works.

While sirens hooted and bells rang, all shops and factories in the town closed and their employees joined the demonstration in solidarity.

All workers in Judenburg believe that the dismissal of VEW employees (VEW have several plants) will be a major catastrophe for the region following on the closure of mines in the neighbouring area of Fohnsdorf.

The works council demanded the resignation of VEW general director Bayer whom they blame for the desperate situation. The Austrian government still want to dismiss even more workers, about 1,000. The American firm of consultants Booz-Allen have even suggested 4,000 redundancies!

In this tense situation Judenburg workers know they have to rely on their own strength. While the Socialist Party (SPO) government press for sackings, local SPO branches support the demands of the workers.

The 28 March demonstration was peaceful and disciplined. But members of the works council have threatened "this was the first demonstration and it was quiet, but it could be different, more radical if we want it."

As the Mayor of Judenburg declared at the final gathering "if we want our town to exist we are dependent on the VEW works, and we'll fight for it to the last."

USSR/Apartheid Ltd?

Behind the backs of the South African and Russian workers the Stalinist bureaucracy in Russia has negotiated secret deals with leading South African capitalists. That was the conclusive finding of the 'Panorama' TV programme of April 6.

Amongst the contacts 'Panorama' listed between the Russian bureaucracy

and the S. African Oppenheimer business empire were: Visits by S. African capitalists to USSR, by Soviet trade officials to S. Africa, to negotiate secret contracts to fix the world-price of the valuable minerals that they both produce, diamonds, platinum and gold.

The S. African De Beers company has a secret con-

tract to purchase most of the gem diamonds that Russia produces. Through channels such as the London merchant bank, Hambros, the Russian bureaucracy receives millions of dollars a year. 'Panorama' claims that Soviet delegations have secretly flown to De Beers headquarters in Kimberley, S. Africa, and entertained Oppenheimer to meals in

London's Connaught Hotel.

The two sides also meet every year at the 'Platinum dinner' in May at the Savoy Hotel. Together Russia and S. Africa produce 95% of the world's platinum and have a number of meetings to ensure that the price stays as high as possible. Similarly with gold; both the Russian bureaucracy and the Apartheid capitalists use the same Swiss bank, Swiss Bank Corporation in Zurich, and the same lawyers, etc.

The programme clearly exposed the cynical hypocrisy of the Russian bureaucrats; last November at the same time as they were welcoming to Moscow the President of Mozambique,

whose country faces increasing military raids from the S. African military, through the back door they ushered in Gordon Waddell, one of the top four men of the Oppenheimer Empire, which helps sustain the apartheid regime.



Letters

VIEWERS? COMMENTS? EXPERIENCES?
CRITICISM? WRITE ABOUT THEM TO:

MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Female miners

Dear Comrades

Comrade Davis in his letter (Militant, 27 March) quoted the statement of Joe Gormley, taken from the 'Daily Express' "I bloody well won't have a woman down a mine, so long as I'm President."

While comrade Drivers is probably quite correct in assessing the political and inferred male-chauvinist stance of Joe Gormley, I cannot help feeling that the wrong conclusions have been reached.

It is not a case of 'preventing' women from working in the pits. While it is absolutely necessary under a capitalist system to fight for every job threatened by reactionary Tory policies, including those in the pits, as socialists we should be considering future energy policy under socialism.

We should look forward to the implementation of a system where the exploitation of solar energy, wind and wave power, thermal energy, etc, make it unnecessary to send men into the bowels of the earth, risking life and limb every shift, grubbing for coal like rats.

We don't send women and children down mines anymore as it was decided to be socially abhorrent. Its also some years since ponies were sent into mines as this was supposedly cruel, although it was alright to continue to send men down.

Under socialism we could soon begin to fetch men out of the pits and replace their jobs with more gainful and meaningful employment.

Only a socialist energy programme, run by and for the workers can possibly achieve this and it is for such a programme that socialists in the NUM must campaign.

Yours fraternally

Steve Ryder

EX-NUM

and Sheffield Park CLP

Import controls—a partial solution?

Dear Comrades,

I was interested in the article by Bob McKee [Militant, 20 March] on 'Import Controls are not the Answer'. I found myself in general agreement with what he was arguing—that is, any wholesale protection or tariff barriers against foreign goods and in some instances, foodstuffs, would in general be injurious to the British workers.

But what the article suffers from as with much that is normally in Militant, is that it is excessively theoretical and as such it does not meet workers' anxieties at the present time.

Nor does it meet thoroughly all the arguments in the documents of the T&GWU and the TUC.

Disarmament and socialism —reply to Rob Sewell

Dear Militant,

As a committed socialist and pacifist I was profoundly disappointed at certain aspects of the article by Rob Sewell [Militant 27 March]. He says that the leadership of CND who imply that the struggle for peace must take precedence over the fight for socialism are completely misguided.

May I suggest it is he who is misguided if he thinks we should wait for socialism before we disarm. However he is right when he says the two are indistinctly linked, for they are, if only by the fact that we will never have true socialism until we disarm.

The ideals of universal brotherhood can never be achieved while those that

are preaching it are killing their fellow beings for whatever cause. Are the leaders of CND to turn away people who genuinely abhor the use of armed force because they are not yet converted to socialism?

How stupid can Rob Sewell get? Militant articles like this, plus a statement made by a militant miners' leader in Kent, who was reported in a recent issue as urging miners to take their pit boots on the picket lines, worry me.

Does it mean that Militant only condemns force used by the capitalists? I hope not.

Yours sincerely,

Ron Williams,

Walsall CND

Brownhills Labour Party

British Steel's logic

Dear Comrade

At the moment we are involved in picketing the Duport Steel works in Llanelli in a fight to save the works and our jobs. A friend Mr Bill McLane from Templeborough Re-rolling mills informed me yesterday that, "my gaffer needs 3,000 tonnes of low-carbon billets from BSC."

"Did you get what your gaffer needed to meet his order book commitments, Bill," I enquired. "No way," he said. "We still badly need supplies of low carbon billets. So he's got to import them next week, he's having to order them from Finland and Germany to maintain that continuous order."

My reply to Bill's answer was unprintable. The steel billets mentioned by Bill are the same type and quality that we had been producing regularly—before closure.

They are not proposing a wholesale eclipse of foreign goods still less a general tariff wall in spite of the general agreement on tariffs and trade and EEC membership requiring free movement of both capital and labour.

What Bob has to ask himself is why does Mrs Thatcher also oppose any extension of import quotas or restrictions? It is because she would have the multinational companies screaming blue-murder and there would be foreign reciprocal action maybe setting up a chain reaction leading to an accelerating rate of capitalist collapse.

The unions do not offer selective import controls [and some employers] as the answer to British prayers. It is put forward as a partial short-term matter allied to many of the demands in Militant itself and the socialist demands of the labour movement as a whole.

What Bob should do is sit down and painstakingly analyse the T&G document.

Then after that he could try to put himself in my shoes and tell me if I am wrong in making represen-

I thought to myself later: Templeborough is a mill with a weekly capacity of re-rolling 6,500 to 7,500 ingot tonnes. Are they alone in being unable to buy from British Steel at a time when we are told "lack of demand" and "over capacity" is rife in the steel industry in this country?

Shamefully, we have been informed Templeborough is just the tip of the iceberg. Their fresh import applications only adds to the increasing river of steel entering this country during Thatcher's inspired depression.

Now that steel river will rise and flood itself when the recession has been and gone. How many other re-rollers, public or private, in this country cannot be supplied by home-produced steel I cannot accurately confirm.

Ray Palmer

Chairman of the 'Preserve Employment at Llanelli Steel' Committee

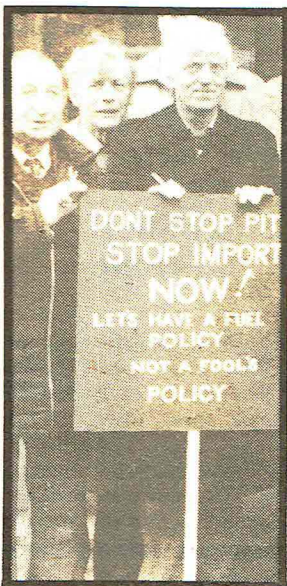


Photo: MILITANT

tations to the Trade Minister about the increase in TV tubes from a third-world country which had promised not to send so many.

If he disagrees try telling the workers in this country who are affected by cheap-labour manufactured products.

Yours,
Syd Bidwell MP
Ealing-Southall



"Impartial" TV coverage of last April's Bristol riots

Bosses' Broadcasting Corporation

Dear Militant

Being a socialist and comparatively active in the General and Municipal Workers' Union, I was particularly interested to read Tony Gill's letter (27th March) which criticised B.C.s Question Time programme. My interest is due to the fact that I was one of the audience.

The programme most certainly came across as yet another piece of Tory propaganda, especially due to the questions asked, and the inept performance of Labour M.P. Stanley Orme.

All the questions asked on the programme have to be submitted for vetting either by return post when you get the admission ticket or handed in when you enter the theatre on the night it is recorded. The admission tickets are allocated to different organisations, unions, trades councils etc.

An interesting fact is that I submitted a question which concerned the Chancellors' policy of not indexing to inflation the tax allowances and by doing this he was yet again hitting the working class man the most.

It was agreed by the powers that be, that I could put this to the Chancellor, but somehow Mr Day forgot to ask me to put it to him.

I would agree with Tony

that the programme was biased towards the Tories. But this was not due to the fact that all the audience were pro-Tory (although trade unionists etc weren't in the majority), or that I and my colleagues hadn't tried to get the socialist message across but due more to the fact that the producers of the show are merely puppets of the ruling class.

Although the programme is biased, I have watched it fairly often and have been disappointed not to see any familiar faces (who are involved with Militant and better informed than I to get the socialist message across) on the programme.

Yours Comradely
E. J. Edwards

We don't ask for much...

Dear Comrades

A day at the races or just taking kids for a swim? It won't be long before both are out of reach of ordinary people.

Last Sunday we took our two kids to the local baths—we set off early as they close at 12 o'clock.

Well, to kick off we stood at the bus stop for 35 mins which is no joke with a 5 and a 2 year old. Services have been reduced round here and the mile journey now costs 25 pence!

At the baths charges are up to 65 pence per adult, we have to pray no-one enquires how old the eldest kid is! The temperature has also

been reduced 3 degrees but it's still packed out (you can't swim a width and it's a bit crowded for the young learners—but they'll survive.)

But to crown it all the cafe has been closed—this is a real blow—in winter it is essential to dry off and like most kids half the fun for mine is having a treat in the cafe.

There's no way our two year old is going to stand by the vending machines in the foyer.

Of course none of these cuts are really painful as Labour council would tell us but all affect the quality of life! I don't think we ask for much!...

Louise Birch
Selly Oak CLP

Are we all 'offenders'?

Dear Comrades

The Government has finally decided to do something about the problems caused by high unemployment among young people.

They are providing places for nearly 400 additional 14-20 year olds to receive 'short sharp shock' treatment in detention centres, while admitting that no evidence as to the "success" of this method will be available until 1983.

This is apparently due to the fact that they are still obliged to provide education

for the under 16s and those implementing the system see this as the stumbling block in that regime which otherwise consists of manual labour and military style exercising and drilling.

They have therefore reduced 'education' to evening study of basic subjects.

It would seem that the Tories see all young people as "offenders" since the life their policies offer—basic education followed by manual labour or military service—is the same for young people outside as well as inside these detention centres.

Barbara Baker
Blaydon CLP

Don't just blame the Tories

Dear Comrades

A leaflet was distributed recently by Nottingham's Labour City Council. While it correctly outlines the effects of the scandalous policies of the Tories, it mentions not one word about alternatives which could be applied by a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

In the leaflet, I'm told to "put the blame where it belongs—on the Tories." Yet doesn't some guilt lie with those on the right of the Labour Party who refuse to fight Tory policies, and merely whine about them?

When I read that £1.27 a week from the rent I pay goes to pay interest charges of the big banks and financial institutions, my response isn't merely to "blame the Tories"—it's to call for the nationalisation of those banks and institutions under democratic workers' control and management, and the complete cancellation of all such criminal interest charges.

And so with the whole set of issues. No! to rent rises. No! to cuts in house-building programmes. Let's not just "blame" the Tories, but show them where we stand!

Yours fraternally
Kevin Slattery
Nottingham West CLP

ads

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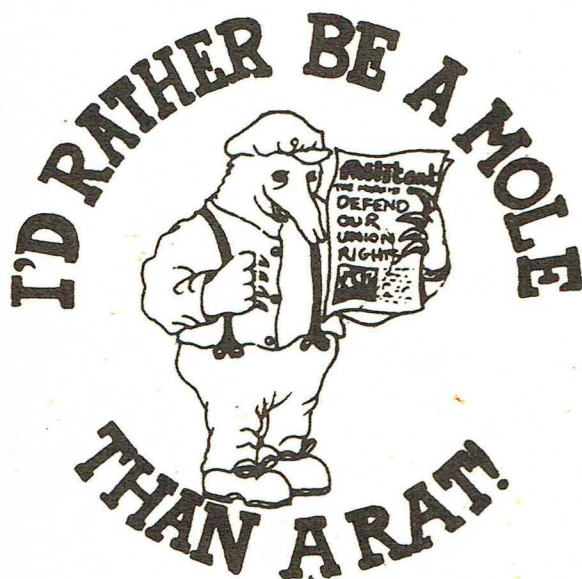
MAY DAY GREETINGS IN MILITANT

We invite your trade union, Labour Party or LPYS branch, shop stewards' organisation or trades council to place in 'Militant' fraternal May Day greetings to the labour and trade union movement.

'Militant' is read by thousands of labour movement activists in Britain and internationally. Unlike the capitalist press we have no rich backers or big business advertisers. We rely on individual workers and workers' organisations like your own to support our newspaper.

Send your greetings of solidarity with the labour movement. Help build a paper that fights for socialism. The closing date for copy is Tuesday 21 April.

RATES FOR GREETINGS: Semi-display: 3 column centimetres (up to 15 words)—£3; 6 column centimetres (up to 25 words)—£6; Display: one-sixteenth page—£10; one-eighth page—£20; one-quarter page—£40.



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Build

Militant

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target 11 April	Target for year
Eastern	1178		1775	7100
East Midlands	1097		1375	5500
Hants & Dorset	920		1300	5200
Humberside	460		875	3500
London East	1688		1900	7600
London West	942		1200	4800
London South	1006		1375	5500
Manchester & Lancs	1035		1450	5800
Merseyside	1033		1650	6600
Northern	1220		2150	8600
Scotland East	675		1100	4400
Scotland West	1299		1875	7500
Southern	1491		1775	7100
South West	661		875	3500
Wales East	612		650	2600
Wales West	762		1150	4600
West Midlands	1199		2150	8600
Yorkshire	1682		2250	9000
Others	224		3125	12500
Total received	19184		30000	120,000

Target for 11 April £30,000

Target for year £120,000

PUT US BACK ON TARGET

THIS WEEK £3,798

Our readers have responded magnificently to our appeal. Nearly £3,800 has come in this week, or is in the post at time of writing.

By Steve Cawley

We'd like to thank everyone who's contributed, especially those who, for reasons of space, we can't name.

From *Eastern* £170 included £15 M Holmes (Basildon CPSA), £16 from Ipswich and £25 from Norwich supporters. *East Midlands* readers raised £365. Northamptonshire supporters collected £63. A Chesterfield meeting raised £13, J Jones (GMWU) £2, G Freeman (Derby NALGO, expenses £5) G Ferris (Beeston LPYS) £3 and C Roe, an unemployed comrade, £2. (Over £60 is on the way from Mansfield as well!)

Hants & IOW have collected £152. Thanks to R Holmes (IOW LPYS), S&D Pragel (Southampton) and J Johnson (Poole NUPE) whose tenner is "in appreciation of successful negotiation by his steward, a Militant supporter." *Humberside's* line moved hardly at all! Thanks to P&M Tibbett for regular sums added on this week. We feel sure more will come in next week!

East London supporters' £370 included £55 from meetings in Hackney and Tower Hamlets, regular donations from V Gillespie (NUR) and C McAskill (NALGO) amounting to nearly £100, J&H Wobey £7, A Clarke (Ilford LPYS) £2 and £1s from D Barr (East Ham), T Bulley (NALGO) and D Phillips (ASLEF) £2.50.

NW London readers sent in £143 this week, mainly due to Brent's Marxist Discussion Group (where we benefitted by £89!), donations by Hillingdon Parks and Schools workers £11.67, A Cahill £5, K Cocklin £4,

and A Holme (Ruislip LPYS) £3.

South London's £248 included over £70 expenses, £7 collected at Erith & Crayford LPYS, individual sums from S Dunk (IRSF), C Oughan (Greenwich LP), B Kelly and L Levane, and the 'surplus' on a Saturday social.

Manchester & Lancs have raised £75 extra, thanks especially to members of Blackburn LPYS, for £10.60. £185 was *Merseyside's* total increase, mostly small donations, such as the fiver from T Cummings (Kirkby LP) but also £12 from a small raffle in Liverpool.

Northern's line has reached £1,220, with £283 in this week—a £100 donation from a tax rebate from Hartlepool, £64 from a meeting at Northern LP Conference, and £46 at a Newcastle meeting. Thanks also to Stockton readers P McGee, J Malcolms and F Cook, and Gateshead Fayre proceeds.

East Scotland supporters sent £40, including a donation of £2.22 from Prestonpans LPYS. (We have divided the £3.50 from Scottish LPYS Committee members and £5 from STUC Youth Committee supporters between East and West Scotland)

West Scotland put on a tremendous spurt of £500. Thanks in particular to J Fleming's (E Kilbride) £200 donation from redundancy money. Socialism is the only guarantee of another job, so it can't come soon enough! Thanks also to B Miller (Glasgow) for £20, and a Clydeside ASLEF member for a tenner.

Southern collected £112 from a very successful meeting at the Southern

Conference. On top came socials in Bracknell and Folkestone, 7 Brighton readers appeal sheet, and Kent NUM member N Simpson (£2).

South West supporters have gone up a further £82 this week, with contributions from P Hammond (Bristol, TU expenses), M Adkins (Bath, translation fee) and D Moss (Brixham LP) amongst others.

Appeals at meetings in Cardiff and Pontypridd were responsible for £151 out of the £230 *E Wales* has raised this week. Other sources were a Cardiff curry evening and B Davies (Pontypridd CLP). *West Wales* had a successful meeting in Swansea (reported in last week's paper) where the collection netted £68 on top of £10 from Lewis Merthyr Lodge (NUM) sent via Swansea supporters. Thanks also for £1s from union officers W Bevan (EETPU) and N Davies (AUEW).

West Midlands readers held a meeting in Birmingham which left us £55 better off, and TGWU 5/909 Branch donated £20, M Welsh (Solihull) £2 and Coventry tax rebate £10. £19 came from Stafford supporters which with others, made a total of £248.

Yorkshire added £267, thanks mainly to Leeds BIFU member F Reilly

(£80), but also to G Cowley (Rotherham) £10, Huddersfield readers £9 and D Lawton (COHSE, York) £2 and many more. *Others* this week included £10.50 raised by a Bristol comrade at the UCW Special Conference.

You've done a really good job this week, more has been raised than by the end of the 13th week last year—which included the collection at LPYS Conference Militant Readers' Meeting! But our tasks are all the more urgent this year and our targets correspondingly higher!

This week has graphically shown the effect of the crisis on working-class youth. We must have the resources to effectively put the Marxist solution!

Readers going to the LPYS conference will have an ideal opportunity to make a concrete contribution at the Militant Meeting. Possibly in the discussion (if you're lucky!) but certainly in the collection. Let's start the second quarter with a record figure that takes our chart well towards £30,000!

Like the East Kilbride comrade who's put his redundancy money into our funds, none of us have any decent future while the present system carries on! Help us help you end it as soon as possible!

CLASSIFIED (continued)

LIVERPOOL

Labour movement debate: 'Which Road to Socialism' **tony Mulhearn** [Pres. Liverpool District LP] for 'Militant'. **Jim Mowatt** [District Officer, Merseyside TGWU] for A.E.S.

Wednesday 29 April at Central Hall, Renshaw St. Liverpool [opp. Lewis's] at 7.30pm.

AND NOW! Plunder Woman carrier bags. Let Thatcher carry the load for a change! A great way of making money for the fighting fund. Prices: £2.00 for 12—minimum order including postage and packing. £10 for 75 etc. Money with order please. Bulk orders: prices on request. Contact: J Nicholson, 25 Grotto Road, Margate, Kent. Tel: 291293. Please allow 21 days for delivery.

Industrial

in brief

A strike by 83 members of TASS, the white collar engineering union, at the Cannon and Stokes engineering firm in Leicester is now entering its seventh week. They had asked for a 12% pay rise, but were offered either nothing at all, or only 5% with strings. This included clocking in and out, scrapping of tea breaks, set holidays and two redundancies. They are picketing on a 24-hour basis, and held a sit-in recently, but management sent in heavies to eject them.

About a thousand workers joined a demonstration through Dunfermline recently in an anti-Tory demonstration organised by the Five Trade Union Action Committee. At the following rally, a speaker from the Lee Jeans occupation in Greenock, where the workers are occupying to save jobs, received a standing ovation when she said, "They are not our jobs to sell. We're staying in till management talk jobs."

A delegation from the Sandinista Workers' Federation (CST) from Nicaragua will hold a public meeting in Newcastle on Wednesday, 22 April. The meeting, organised by the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, will be held at the Bridge Hotel, at the end of the High Level Bridge, at 7.30 pm.

The Findus strike in Grimsby has now entered its fourth week. One picket has alleged a case of assault by the canteen manager, and the police are now investigating the incident. The morale of the strikers is higher than ever, but it must be matched by the national union officials, who are dragging their feet in making this dispute official.

Over 2,000 workers in Glasgow District Council Housing maintenance department face the sack.

The Tories have slashed the department budget from £90 million to £40 million for 1981-82, less £7 million for "overspending" in 1980-81.

At mass meeting throughout the city workshops, the 5,000 workforce rejected the redundancies. Workers unanimously backed the shop stewards' recommendation for a half day strike.

The department including the staff side will link up with other council workers who face the sack, and also tenants' associations, and march to the city chambers.

The Labour Group housing committee will be asked to support the campaign to oppose the sackings—if they will not support us then they must make way for others who will!

Workers also backed a further half-day strike for when the full Labour controlled council meets, and a levy was agreed for the production of leaflets and material.

FIRM STAND WILL BEAT LT BOSSES

A mass meeting of London Transport building workers last week at Chiswick works fully backed the action taken to save jobs so far.

It was reported to the members that the threat of industrial action, the overtime ban and the picketing campaign has led to the employers withdrawing their original plan for 80 redundancies.

The new proposals however are still not acceptable. The London Transport Executive are still looking for 40 job losses by offering early retirement, with implications of redundancies just before Christmas. The decision of the meeting is for proper early retirement accompanied by a manning level agreement and no redundancy clause.

The mass meeting agreed overwhelmingly to increase the strike levy of 20p a man to 50p—this being used for the pickets on the sites where the employers have given work to contractors. Edgware, Sidcup, and Victoria Garages are now blacked. As last week's article mentioned, in the past the LT building workers have been looked upon as unorganised—in fact, the mass meeting was held on LT property—no doubt the employers thought the workers might begin to back off.

But now the workers have



seen their strength in the victories which have already taken place. The management are now realising this too. Their instruction to make the men sign in and out at their district offices (see last week's 'Militant')

By Helen Bulaitis
(LTE Building Department)

Below: LT building workers at the mass meeting at the Chiswick works on April 9.

was smashed by the workers' firm stand—the instruction was reversed within 48 hours!

The building workers have received resolutions of support from the London Labour Party, Leyton and

Merton busworkers.

Send your donations and messages of support to: C Murphy (Senior Steward), c/o LTE Building Department, Parsons Green Lane, London SW6.

FBU — STOP VICTIMISATION

Victimisation of trade unionists is becoming commonplace throughout the country, but you would be hard pressed to come across a more ludicrous and clear cut case than that of Fireman Roland Stevens.

Roland was dismissed from his post at Blackpool Central Fire Brigade for the hideous crime of failing to salute an officer!

There is nothing in the rules that say officers should

be saluted, and the union directive is that officers not in full uniform should not be saluted. This was the case with Mr Stevens.

Originally a more serious charge of neglected duty was levelled against Mr Stevens, but this was dropped because there was absolutely no evidence to support it.

No warnings were given (contrary to standard practice) and Mr Stevens was dismissed instantly. But this case of victimisation later became clear when it was discovered that the authorities had already decided to sack him three weeks before his actual hearing!

To finally confirm the whole nature of this case, in his formal letter of dismissal, Mr Stevens was advised that there was insufficient evidence to arrive at a decision now has to be 'irrelevant.'

The local branch of the FBU overwhelmingly decided to take immediate industrial action to get their brother reinstated. This decision now has to be backed by the County Brigade, who have yet to make their final decision on the issue. But it is imperative that the lead given by the Blackpool firemen receives 100% backing from

the FBU.

This case is an indication of the length that the authorities will go to, to try and impose discipline on the trade union movement. It must be seen as a warning to the membership generally, and must be fought. Messages of support to: John Barclay, FBU Branch Secretary, 83 McCauley Av., Blackpool.

By
Andy Williamson
(Blackpool LPYS)

ANSELLS

Talks between Allied management and T&G's national officers proved abortive last Tuesday.

All management are interested in is breaking the strength of the union by closing down the brewery. This is costing them, by their own figures, £1 million a week; the true figure is

probably double that.

At the Romford brewery, where pickets are being held off pending the outcome of the intervention of the T&G national officers, Allied are now pushing for redundancies at that site.

There will be a branch meeting this week for all members with Alex Kitson, Deputy General Secretary, speaking, in which the members will be looking for a bold lead to win this dispute.

Last week, the Gibbs

brewery and wholesaler in Salisbury was picketed. In three days the owners signed an agreement not to deliver any beer to companies suspected of delivering in the West Midlands. As a consequence of the picket at Gibbs, the union at the plant is now 100%!

As Brothers R Stratton and A Spence put it, "The blokes there are on farming money, £20 below the national agreement. Also the workers there are expected to do any job, and some are

working from 6 o'clock in the morning until 7 pm at night.

"The owner thinks he is still in the 1920s, with the workers calling him Mr Peter (that's his first name). The pickets wish to thank Labour Party members for the accommodation and hospitality provided during their stay in Salisbury.

Marsdens, West Bromwich, and Clayton's, Oldbury are being covered at the moment with plans to send teams to other areas to

BIFU Conference

Members of the Banking, Insurance and Finance Union involved in the current pay dispute will be taking 24 hour strike action on Wednesday 22 April.

The 8,000 members will be striking in the West End of London, West Midlands, Avon and Merseyside. Action is also planned at Southend credit card centre which could disrupt the credit card system—Social Democrats beware!

BIFU will also ballot its 80,000 members in the clearing banks for a further 24-hour strike and further 'guerrilla' action.

The mood of BIFU conference held in Blackpool this week was that union members were mainly low paid clerical workers, and were no longer prepared to be kicked around by the bank employers.

The conference unanimously condemned the intimidatory tactics of the employers. Reports were given of management staff accelerating through picket lines.

Management in an attempt to get around the action, have been telling staff to move vast sums of cash in private cars. One bank worker at Lloyds, Bristol, was told to transfer £60,000 in cash in a private car! This sort of thing was putting BIFU members in danger of being attacked during a robbery.

The banks' offer of 10% was seen as an insult, particularly when the five big clearing banks made a profit of £1,400 million in 1980, or when the chairman of the Nat West bank has just awarded himself a 31% pay rise, and all members of the board of the Midland bank are giving themselves a 50% rise.

By John Bulaitis

'1926 General Strike' by Trotsky, Ted Grant, Peter Taaffe. Price 45p [including postage] from World Books, 1 mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

be temporarily suspended awaiting the outcome at the branch meeting.

However, with free trade being lost and pubs complaining, because Ansell's mild and bitter can't be replaced, an escalation of the dispute is needed. The jugular vein of Ansell's needs to be hit and the T&G nationally should call for an all-out strike of all Allied plants until all the jobs at Ansell's are saved.

CIVIL SERVICE UNIONS

DETERMINED TO WIN

The strike action being taken by the civil service unions is having a major effect.

Despite the low key stand of the government the action is biting.

The selective strikes at the VAT computer centre, *Southend* and the Inland Revenue computer centres at *Shipley* and *Cumbernauld* have deprived the government of £1 billion so far, through stopping £200m VAT and £500m PAYE, National Insurance and income tax per week. The Tories financial strategy will be increasingly dislocated by the actions in these areas.

The VAT and Inland Revenue local offices apparently no longer have active records of who has or has not paid their tax.

The longer the strike continues in these areas the more pressure will be on the Tories to return to the money market. This would jack up interest rates which would bring howls of protest from industry. The pressure would then be on Thatcher to negotiate and settle the dispute.

The situation at the naval

By Kevin Roddy
(CPSA, DHSS
Washington Child
benefit office,
Broad Left Presidential
Candidate)

dockyards, in particular the *Clyde* marine base (see back page), are having a real effect on the navy's operations. The Tories want to crush the strike, by using military personnel.

But they know this will cause anger and resentment throughout the civil service and within the labour movement generally. Already messages have come from unions such as the Transport & General in Scotland, pledging support to the strikers if the military are brought in to try and smash the strike.

The government, with the help of the Tory press, say they will 'sit it out.' However, they are obviously perplexed about what to do next.

Sensing this and deter-

mined to twist the screw even further, a number of demands are being raised by union members throughout the country.

The results of the ballots conducted by two of the civil service unions, the CPSA and the IPCS, among their air traffic controller members in the *Civil Aviation Authority* (CAA) will be known just after Easter. This action would effectively close a group of airports everyday.

With associated instructions not to handle diverted traffic, this would effectively mean the closure of Britain's main airports for the five week period this particular programme is intended to cover.

Action by CAA employees would give a real boost to the strike and bring the government under further pressure from the airlines, and industry cannot allow it to be closed for any length of time.

With 50,000 of the CPSA membership working in the Department of Health and Social Security and another 30,000 in the Department of Employment—nearly half of the CPSA's civil service membership—there is a growing demand from members in these departments to

get more involved in the strike.

Increasing pressure is coming from members to bring out the DHSS and DE computer centres at the Child Benefit Offices at *Washington*, *Livingstone*, *Newcastle* and *Reading*.

The effect of this if nothing were done by the unions to protect pensioners, the sick, the unemployed, would be to stop the payment of pensions and benefits. The unions have correctly stated however, that the shut down of these computers should be linked to the introduction of emergency services in local offices.

This would fulfil the responsibility of civil service workers to the poor, the sick and the unemployed, whilst at the same time, causing havoc to the running of the DHSS and DE departments and putting further massive pressure on the government.

It is vital that mass meetings are held in DHSS and DE local offices, addressed by senior union officials to thoroughly explain the need for the action and so on.

This needs to be followed up by massive publicity throughout the trade unions

and labour movement, to assure workers that benefits and pensions to the most vulnerable sections of the community will be paid by the unions' emergency services.

If all this is done, it will effectively counter the hysterical onslaughts the Tories will inevitably spout through the media. Every twist and dirty trick will be tried on by the Tories to try and undermine the resolve of the civil service unions involved, and divide worker from worker.

The correct preparation by the unions will render this absolutely harmless, and will in fact highlight the role of the Tories and their friends in the media during disputes, in the eyes of workers generally.

The demand for a march and lobby of parliament should be supported, as well as a two day national strike, now being proposed by members throughout the country.

This action must be preceded by thorough preparatory action by the leadership so that the civil service unions move forward together as a unified body.

This would show the growing support for this strike and the civil servants

determination to win the campaign. It would also lift the morale of those members on selective strikes.

The growing amount of money coming in from the levy the unions are collecting shows the mood of those members not involved with selective strikes. This mood should be captured and linked to national action.

If these demands are taken up and implemented after the Easter break, then the next stage of the campaign would start off with a real impact on the government, on industry and on the civil service itself.

It would tell the Tories and big business that the civil servants are not the 'easy option' Thatcher first thought, but a group of workers determined to defend their pay agreements and living standards.

Lee
Jeans

Ten weeks after occupying their factory the workers at Lee jeans are more determined than ever to resist redundancies.

In a recent secret ballot of the 240 strong workforce, only four voted in favour of negotiating better redundancy terms! Kathleen Kinsella and Mary Bryce, members of the occupation committee, told 'Militant': "The workers in here aren't going to be bought off."

"There's millions of pounds worth of machinery and materials in this factory and its going to stay here until every job is secure—no matter how long it takes."

The girls laid the blame for the crisis facing the industry squarely on the shoulders of the bosses.

"Anybody who still believes the myth that high wages cause redundancies should have a look at the wage packets in here—£49 is the basic wage of most of the women."

They identified lack of investment and management inefficiency as being major factors contributing to the decline of the textile industry generally, with Lee Jeans being no exception.

A huge tidal wave of support has been flooding in; every shipyard worker on the Clyde is paying a weekly levy of 50p.

In the engineering factories weekly collections have been organised, and hundreds of individual donations are being received every week.

Donations and messages of support to Ellen Monaghan, Lee Jeans Occupation, 55 Cambridge Road, Greenock, Inverclyde.

BY ALAN McCOOMBES

NUT must lead fightback

By Felicity Dowling

(NUT)

Immeasurable damage has been done to the education service by this Tory government.

Shortly after the damning report on the cuts published by HM Inspectors, the government announced a further major cutback, including the axeing of 43,000 teaching posts by 1984.

Teachers, parents and the labour movement are looking to the NUT for a lead in the struggle against these attacks.

Not for nothing has the respectable educational press been urging caution on the teaching unions. In area after area, opposition to education cuts has been taken by the parents and other trade unionists, and unprecedented demonstrations of support have been held.

The leadership of the NUT have until now been timid and cautious, failing to understand the flow of anger experienced by teachers and parents.

This must be lead and channelled into challenging this government's 'right' to damage schools and colleges.

There is a clear need for a national campaign. Local campaigns have taken place, but the cuts must be attacked by a nationwide campaign. NUT conference should adopt the demand for national strike action



Parents, students and trade unionists joined teachers in a lobby of Birmingham council on 7 April

against enforced redundancies. This must be the union's sticking point.

Major action by the NUT must be in co-ordination with other local authority unions and support from parents must be organised.

The ridiculous attempt to discipline NUT officers in Lambeth for taking action together with other local authority workers must be

thrown out by conference.

In 1918 the TUC called for class sizes of 30; this is yet to be achieved! Yet the government continues to cut back on the number of teachers.

Class sizes are a crucial factor in educational success. The fight for teachers' jobs links with the fight for reduced class size, and therefore with the educat-

ional opportunity of the children we teach.

However, if the union is to be steeled ready for this struggle, a clear policy on salaries is crucial. The days of easy promotion (which made poor basic salaries bearable) have gone.

A decent rate for the job of classroom teaching is essential. The new salary structure should seek to

unify teachers and lessen the enormous differentials at present. All teachers must benefit from the new pay structure.

Never before have the challenges facing NUT conference been as great. But without resolute action being planned and accepted at conference, the situation next year will be even more grim.

CIVIL SERVICE WORKERS DEFY TORY THREATS



Strikers at Longbenton, Newcastle on 9 March. Involvement of civil service workers is even higher now. For other civil service reports—see page 15

Strike-breaking by the Navy —on the orders of Thatcher —has only strengthened the resolve of the civil servants to step up the action on their pay campaign.

The Navy moved in on Tuesday to work on a Polaris Submarine at the Faslane site, work normally done by civil service union members now on selective strike action.

In response, half a million civil servants throughout the country walked out. Many did not wait for the formal union instructions.

The civil servants struck for the day, and the campaign of industrial action in defence of pay agreements, will be escalated. Department of Employment and DHSS workers will not probably join in the campaign of industrial action [see page 15].

Bill Boyle, a Council of Civil Service Unions representative at the strike headquarters in Glasgow, said: "There has been a massive response in every area to counter the government's attempt to break the strike. The number of union members taking action is probably higher than those who joined the initial one-day strike on 9 March. There is an incredible feeling of determination by civil ser-

By Peter Shilton
 (CPSA) and 'Militant' reporters

vants that they will not be broken by whatever tactics the government try to use."

In the West of Scotland itself, the action by the government was greeted with DHSS and Inland Revenue Offices, the Courts, Ministry of Defence sites, and the Met Office closing down as civil service union members walked out.

But the Tories are not only using the armed forces to try and undermine the strike action.

In Edinburgh, three union members have been cautioned by police under the 'Conspiracy' law of 1856! Two of the three were stopped by police when they followed scabs who were attempting to break the strike by using Post Office boxes to collect PAYE monies. They wanted to discover the centre used for this operation so that it could be picketed by the civil service unions.

The third, a full-time official in Cumbernauld, has also been warned by

police under this outdated law. The authorities are considering prosecution.

Similarly in Shipley, Yorkshire, a senior representative of the Inland Revenue Staff Federation told 'Militant' that the police had threatened their members with the 'conspiracy' law, and stopped them following scabs who were delivering mail.

The scabs concerned are from local pubs and paid £100 a day to deliver mail!

The civil service employers and the government are trying to use suspension as a way of escalating the strike, in an attempt to soak up our financial and physical resources. This was demonstrated quite clearly on Thursday [9 April] when, in Manchester, 1,000 suspension notices were issued in one of the IRSF tax offices.

A demonstration was immediately called, and 1,000 members responded! During the march and IRSF member was arrested. In reaction to this, a mass demonstration was called in Stockport on Monday. Some 2,000 joined the march in a magnificent display showing the civil servants will not be intimidated by the police or the employers.

In the Manchester, Longsight, DHSS office last week members worked strictly to grade and blacked certain areas of work. Suspension notices were issued, but the members were brought out on selective strike action before the notices could take effect!

Striking members of the Inland Revenue Staffs Federation were angered when they were told at a mass rally at the Trades Hall in

Shipley how 'The Times' and the 'Now!' magazine had stopped reports going into their journals which were sympathetic to the civil servants.

'The Times' journalists had reported back to the paper that civil servants were 11%—13% below the average industrial wage according to a comparability study. This was suppressed by the editor. Instead, an editorial attacked the strikers.

Throughout the campaign, the bosses' media has tried to undermine the action by printing horror stories of how the dispute will affect working people.

One example was the publicity given to Thatcher's ridiculous outburst over the action at the Clyde submarine base. Civil servants, she ranted, were putting 'personal gains before the safety of the realm.'

Yet they are deliberately concealing the complete disruption of the government's financial and monetary policies by the civil servants' action.

You have to delve into the pages of the serious journals of big business, like the 'Financial Times', to get a real picture of the enormous pressure the government is now under.

The dispute is now entering a crucial stage, with the government, desperate to collect in their revenue, prepared to take almost any action against the civil service unions. The unions must be prepared to meet this challenge, with a well-disciplined escalation of action, meeting the government's strike breaking attempts blow for blow.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

in power there will be more and more trouble," was one typical comment.

"Since that woman has been in," said hairdresser whose shop was smashed up, "it's been cut, cut, cut!"

"I hope they smash up my house too!" said one woman (white). "Then I might get re-housed at last!" Rioting and burning will not solve the problems, but years of decay and neglect have produced despair.

Between 1,500 and 1,800 of Lambeth's 13,000 jobless are under 20 and have never had a job. About half of Brixton's jobless are black.

Is it any wonder that there is frustration and anger? Is it any wonder that some of the youth are pushed into crime?

But who are the real criminals? Responsibility for the explosion of anger lies firmly on the shoulders of big business, the banks, the landlords, the property developers—and all the other parasites whose profits come before the needs of working people.

Above all, responsibility lies with the Tories, whose attempts to rescue big business profits have quadrupled unemployment among Lambeth black youth in the last year.

Not surprisingly, Thatcher has tried to deflect the blame from Tories and their big-business backers.

Unemployment is not the cause, she says. So what is the cause, Mrs Thatcher?

Tory cuts have had a devastating effect on already atrocious hous-

ing. They have slashed vital social services and cut unemployment and social security benefits.

An enquiry under a single top judge, Lord Scarman, will solve nothing. Everyone knows what caused the problems. What is needed are solutions!

The labour movement must initiate its own enquiry to provide a launching pad for a campaign to change the conditions which produce the crisis.

Even before Scarman has begun his enquiry, however, Thatcher, Whitelaw and other Tories are already saying "You can't buy solutions." They have made it clear that they have no intention of injecting the massive resources needed to improve the area.

The Tories are bankrupt. They have no solutions.

Instead, the Tory reactionaries are calling for an even heavier clamp down on "law and order".

But it was the police's so-called "Operation Swamp" which built up the tension which led to the explosion. Despite denials by police chiefs at the weekend, it is now come out that they "swamped" the Brixton area in the previous week or so with dozens of extra policemen and detectives.

The police army of occupation must be withdrawn not stepped up!

We must fight for socialist policies to solve the real problems!

We must fight to bring down this reactionary government!

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